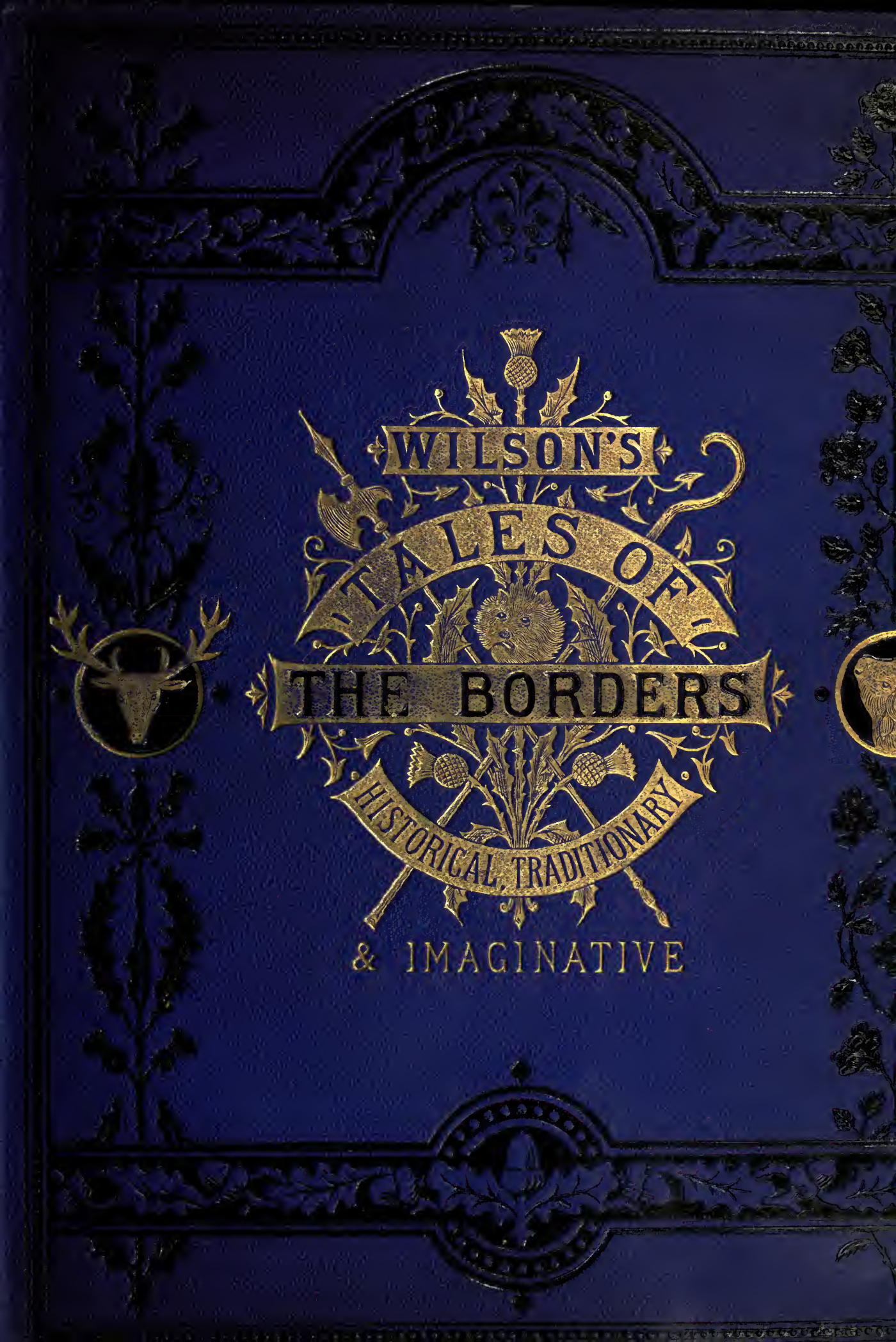
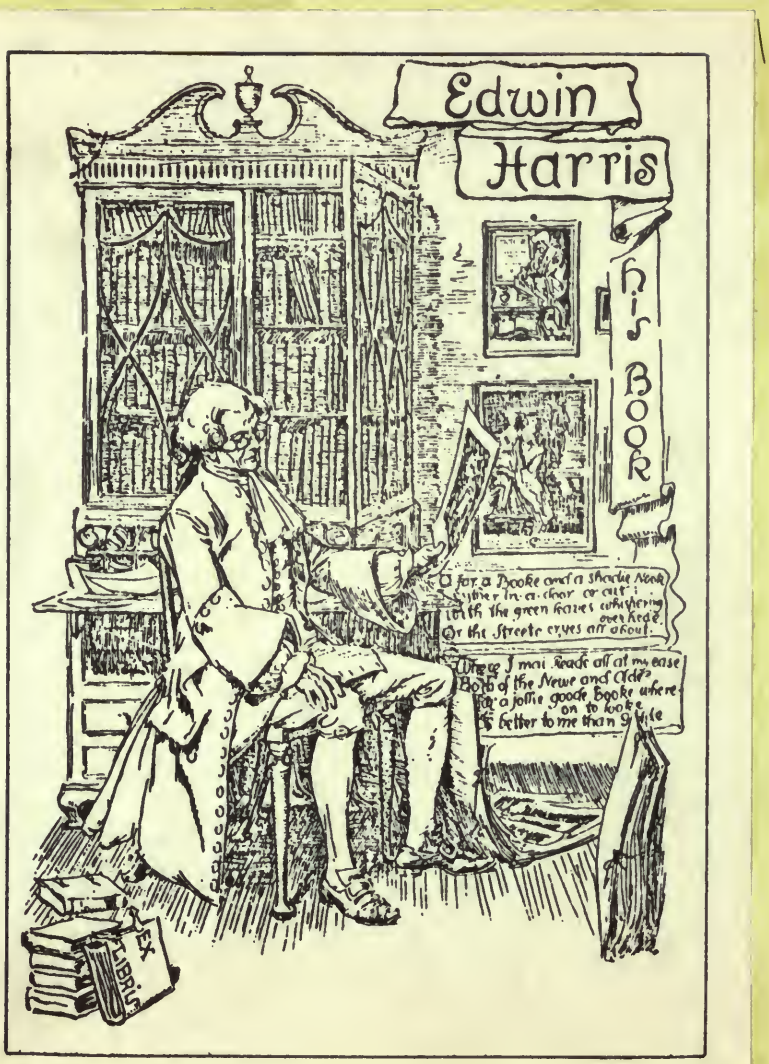

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TALES OF
THE BORDERS
HISTORICAL, TRADITIONARY
& IMAGINATIVE


Edwin
Harris
his
Book
O for a Booke and a Shadie Nooke
eyther In a cheare or elle
With the greene leaves whispering
overhede
Or the Streete eryes all aboute.
Where I may Reade all at my ease
Both of the Newe and Olde
For a jollie goode Booke where
on to looke
Is better to me than Golde
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THE DUEL.





Wilson's Tales of the Borders.

Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative.

WILLIAM & MACKENZIE
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WILSON'S

HISTORICAL, TRADITIONARY, AND IMAGINATIVE

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF

SCOTLAND;

WITH AN

Illustrative Glossary of the Scottish Dialect.

PENRICE
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WILSON'S

Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE SIEGE OF PERTH.

In the year 1310, King Robert Bruce had overcome many of those extraordinary difficulties that threatened to render all the efforts of mere man unavailable in regaining for Scotland that perfect liberty of which she had so long boasted, and which, though it had never been taken from her absolutely, had been, by the unwarrantable schemes and policy of the first Edward, loosened from her grasp, and lay trampled on by the fierce genius of war. Great and wonderful, however, as had already been the prowess and determination of Bruce, and successful beyond the aspirations of hope as had been his efforts in the glorious cause of his country's freedom, there was great room for question whether Scotland would even at this period have triumphed, had the sceptre of England not fallen so opportunely into the hands of the second Edward. The first and greatest of all Scotland's foes, the first Edward, had died three years before, at Burgh-upon-Sands, leaving, as Froissard informs us, his dying injunction on his son, to boil his body in a caldron till the bones should part with the flesh, and to carry the grim relics with him into Scotland, with the condition that they should not be buried till Scotland was subdued. The legacy of dry bones from which the spirit of the great king had departed, was apparently all of his father that the young Edward inherited; for he soon displayed so much vaccilation of policy, and so little genius for war, that, if Providence had intended to work to the hands of Bruce for the salvation of his country, she could not have brought about her designs with greater effect than by giving Bruce as an enemy the young King of England. Things were going straight forward to the result of Bannockburn. Bruce had been successful almost everywhere. The clergy at Dundee had declared his right to the throne, and the injustice of the decision that gave Baliol the crown; the nobles, with the exception of Angus, Buchan, and some others, were in his favour; but, above all, the common people, in whom the true sovereignty of every country lies, had begun to see in their new king those qualities that are calculated to move the heart. The hopes of Bruce rose every hour; and, having scattered the forces of the English in every recent encounter, he saw the necessity and felt the power of seizing some of the walled towns that Edward had fortified with much care, as if stone and lime could bind the freedom of Scotland. The town of Perth was the one that seemed then of greatest importance, as well from its central situation between the Highlands and Lowlands, as from the state of its battlements, which were a regular fortification, with strong walls defended by high towers, and all surrounded by a broad and deep fosse.

The town had, for some time, been under siege, and being one of those that Edward was determined to hold to the last, was promised succour with the first supplies that should enter the Tay. It was commanded by William Oliphant, an Anglicised Scot, who, with a firmness worthy of a better cause, had resolved to be true to the enemy of his country, and to give up the town only with his life. But his efforts were sorely thwarted by the remissness of Edward in sending provisions, and by the effects of a grievous famine, that, as a consequence of the intestine wars by which the country had been so wofully torn, was desolating the land in every quarter. He had already drained the pockets of the most wealthy of the citizens, by forcing them to supply him with money, by which he contrived to get in provisions to enable him to hold out against Bruce. Among the rest, a rich burgher from the Lower Provinces, Peter of Ghent, (his latter name has not reached us,) was expected to lend him a large sum of money. The Fleming was, in those days, what the Scottish afterwards became—remarkable for the possession of the faculty of prudence—the legitimate offspring of the genius of merchandise. By the importation of broad cloths and armour gear, he had contrived to realize a large fortune, and was reported by the good men of Perth as one of the wealthiest merchants in the kingdom. He had only one child, a daughter, commonly known by the name of Anne of Ghent, a young creature of great beauty, and, what may appear to have been somewhat remarkable in her station, of a spirit that was deeply imbued with the love of chivalry. But we would form a very inadequate estimate of the charms of that extraordinary power which overturned kingdoms and damsels' hearts wherever its influence was felt, if we were to limit its sphere to the sons and daughters of nobility. Its principles, indeed, are found in every bosom that responds to the sentiments of love and heroism; and from the humble and beautiful Anne of Ghent, up to the noble and heroic Isabella of Buchan, the spirit burned with a fervour that was only in some accounted less strong because no opportunities were afforded for its display.

It was not in Scotland that this spirit had been first fanned into a flame in the bosom of the fair Fleming, but in France, where the *preux chevalier* was seen in all his pride and glory. When about sixteen years of age, she had accompanied her father to Flanders, when he resorted thither for the purpose of traffic; and, in order to gratify his daughter, of whom he was justly proud, he had taken her to Paris, to be present at a joust held before Louis IX. The display of arms on that occasion was a trial between Sir Piers Guyard and Sir William Indelgonde, the latter of whom having defamed the mistress of the former, had been compelled, by order of Louis, to prove his assertion by the issue of a mortal combat. The battle ended by the death of Indelgonde; but what possessed greater charms to Anne than the details of the *duellum*, was the extraordinary sight she witnessed of twenty untried squires of France, all arrayed in shining coats of armour, with long flowing plumes of various colours on their glittering basnets, taking, according to the custom of these days, their first oaths, "before the peacock and the ladies," that they would not see with both eyes until they had accomplished some daring deed of arms. The gay bird of gaudy hues was brought into a large pavilion erected at the end of the arena; and, like that before which King Edward I. swore at Westminster when he denounced poor Scotland, was encircled with a thin covering of golden gauze, and placed on a tripod ornamented with many carved devices of chivalry. The squires, one by one, knelt before the bird, and recited their oaths, and then, turning round to the queens of their

destinies, solicited like mendicants, with one knee on the ground, a silk ribbon to bind up the orb which was about to be deprived of the fair sight of their charms Nearly opposite to where Anne sat, a very young chevalier of the name of Rolande of Leon knelt for his eye gear; and though twenty ladies of birth, all anxious that their gifts should be accepted, threw to him ribbons of silk, it happened that, whether from chance or from some mysterious sympathy between the hand and eyes of the young mendicant, a narrow green stripe that Anne in her enthusiasm tore hurriedly from her head-gear, fell into his willing grasp. When she saw the fluttering trophy in the hands of so comely a youth, she trembled with modest fear; for she knew that, as the daughter of a burgher, rich as he was, she had but a very questionable title to compete for the honours of chivalry; but, when she saw the ribbon bound round his head, and the helmet placed upon it, she was ready to faint outright, and it was with difficulty that she retained her position on the bench. As soon as the crowd began to move, she hastened away to join her father, who was waiting for her beyond the palisades. Next day, she was on her way to Flanders, and shortly afterwards she arrived at the city of Perth.

Two or three years had now passed, since the fair Fleming acted the almost involuntary part of a high lady, within the pale of the *Theatre de la chevalerie*. Living, with the rich old merchant, within the walls of a city devoted to traffic, she had had few opportunities of witnessing another show of arms. The warriors of Scotland were then holding their jousts in the open fields and thick forests; and, in place of fighting for the smiles of women, were doing battle for the liberties of their ancient and much abused country. But the rising fame of Bruce, his brother Edward, and Douglas, and Randolph, claimed her feelings of admiration; and she would have given her rosary itself, with her jewelled cross, to have got a glimpse of men of whom all the ladies of Christendom were enamoured. She often pictured to herself, as she sat in her small parlour that fronted the city wall, their forms firmly girt with their shining armour; but a visor was never lifted up to the eye of her fancy without revealing the feature of Rolande, as she saw him kneeling at her feet for the gift he solicited and obtained. The face had been deeply imprinted in her memory, and the encircling gift which she had bestowed, seemed to connect her by some indefinable tie with one whom she might never see again, but of whom she could never cease to think. His elegant and manly form, which displayed all the graces of the accomplished man at arms, mixed itself with all her thoughts, and her greatest delight was to prefigure to herself the appearance, on some occasion, of that same warrior, with his left eye bound by the badge she had given him, and a declaration on his tongue, as he knelt before her, that she had the sole power of restoring him full-orbed to the light, which he might now claim as the reward of his prowess.

Anne was thus one evening indulging in some of these reveries of a love-sick brain, when Peter of Ghent entered the room. He was dressed in his Sunday's suit, with his ample surcoat of the best broad cloth, girt round the waist with a leather belt, his broad slouched hat of felt, and boots of the old Flemish style turned down at the tops, forming altogether a favourable contrast with the roughly clad people of those early times, when the rough hats, coarse jerkins, and untanned shoes constituted the apparel of Scotland's sons. Anne looked up, and a slight feeling of surprise passed through her mind as she noticed him thus arrayed.

"The town is still in great danger, Anne," said he, as he took a seat by her side, at the fire of blazing fagots that threw a bright glare over the beautiful face of his daughter. "The enemies of Edward seem to be on the increase. Dundee has surrendered, the whole of Galloway has been ravaged, and Bruce, become bolder by his success, lies looking on our good town, as the wolves of Atholl look on the sheep-fold in the glen."

"If there had been lions in these parts, father," answered Anne, "I might have heard from thee a comparison more suitable to the qualities of that brave soldier."

"These words, Anne," replied Peter, "but ill become a liege woman of King Edward. This poor country cannot thrive without the protecting power of England, where more broad cloths are disposed of in one year than Scotland uses in ten. The limbs of the sturdy hills and dalesmen seem to spurn all modes of human comfort; yet verily the love of ease and warmth to the body is the parent of all arts and improvement; and, until that begins to be felt, we can have no hope of Scotland."

Anne looked up and smiled at this professional allusion to the source of her father's wealth.

"But I need not so speak to the pretty Anne," he added, returning her smile; "for I know that thou hast the fashionable womanish affection of these times, for steel as the commodity of man's apparel—and thereto appertaineth the subject of which I came to speak to thee. Our Governor, William Oliphant, who, though a Scotchman, is as true an adherent of Edward as ever fought under the banner-borne bones of his father, wanteth a thousand Flemish nobles, to enable him to get provisions for our citizens from a Dutch galley in the Tay; and whom should he apply to for it but Peter of Ghent, who is looked upon as being the richest man of Perth?"

"And wilt thou give it him, father?" said Anne. "Of a surety thou wilt lose it if thou dost; for, were Perth as strong as Roxburgh, which they say is the strongest hold of these parts, it would not stand against such a warrior as Robert Bruce; and where wilt thou get thy money again if the town falls into the hands of the Scotch?"

"That is a good point of argument for a woman, love," replied Peter. "I fear for the old town myself—for they tell me, that Bruce's fame has brought to his blue banner three French knights, with their left eyes bound up by ladies' favours, who deem that their feats of arms in an escalade of Perth may restore to them their sight. Doubtless they will fight like lions or devils; but seest thou not, that, whether I give the money or not, the town may fall, and all I have in the world may be wrenched from me by these naked katherans, to whom a single merk, albeit it were clipt to the demensions of King David's bodles, would be a fortune?"

Anne was silent. The mention of the monoculous knights of France had driven merks and all other monies from her mind, and she would have rejoiced to have seen Perth taken upon the instant, provided always that she were taken with it. But Peter understood not her absence of mind, and resumed his argument, on the assumption that Anne was listening with all due attention to his scheme.

"But Peter of Ghent," he again said, "never gave a silver piece, or a woollen piece either, for nothing; and if my dutiful Anne will enter into my scheme, she may have for her consort no less a man than William Oliphant himself, the Governor of Perth, and her wedding dress shall be of the best silks of Nismes, the richest gloves of Grenoble, and sandals from the fair of Bocaire."

This announcement of some cunning purpose of her father filled Anne with alarm. Oliphant, a dissolute man, had been sometimes in the habit of calling at the house, and she had often thought that she herself was the object of his attraction. Her father, by mentioning the French knights that fought under the banner of Bruce, had raised a hope that her chevalier of the green ribbon was among them, and now he had caused an alarm that might have been read in her countenance.

"William Oliphant, the Governor of Perth," she replied, as she held down her face towards the blazing faggots, "will not surely stoop to marry the daughter of a Flemish merchant."

"Money will make any man stoop, fair Anne," replied Peter. "I have heard the back armour of the bravest knight of the lists crack with the bow to Mammon, as loud as when he knelt to the peacock. A merchant knows the science of provisos, and conditions, and stipulations, and never a Scotch plack will William Oliphant get from Peter of Ghent, but upon the condition that he wed my Anne when the town is saved from the arms of Bruce and his blind knights, and the promised succours shall arrive from England. By Saint Dennis, we may have a jolly wedding in the midst of our jubilee of liberation. What sayest, my love?"

Anne still hung down her head. She feared to oppose her father, who was indulgent to her, and had hitherto prided himself on her obedience. She was, besides, overcome with the conflicting thoughts that had been so suddenly raised in her mind by the mention of the French knights, and of this new purpose of her father, that seemed to destroy all the hopes she still entertained of one day enjoying the affections of the man who had first produced an effect upon her heart. A deep sigh escaped from her, and roused her father's suspicions of the cause of her silence.

"Speak, Anne," he said; "thou hast already captivated the Governor by thy beauty, and my money will do the rest. He will be knighted by Edward, if he beat off the Bruce; and my daughter will be a lady."

"William Oliphant is not a man according to my heart, father," answered she, at last, with a trembling heart; "but might I be absolved from my engagement to marry him, if the town falls before the arms of the Scots?" she added, as she looked modestly and fearfully into his face.

"Most certainly, love," replied Peter; "and, moreover, thou shalt not be bound to Oliphant personally, for it is I that must make the condition that he will marry thee in consideration of the loan I gave him for the good old town."

Well pleased with the dutiful answer he had got from his daughter, the worthy man of traffic sallied forth to meet, by special appointment, the Governor, who anxiously waited for him in his residence. After he had gone forth, Anne bethought herself of what her fear of offending her father had wrung from her. Though timid from love and duty, she was of a noble spirit, and upheld her heart as it recoiled from the thought of becoming the wife of a man she hated, by revolving in her mind the chances of the gallant Scots forcing the town to surrender, and relieving her from her qualified obligation. She wished all success to the chivalrous Bruce, because she loved the character of him, and the great and enthusiastic spirits who were struggling for freedom; but she was filled with a high swelling hope that burned in her bright eye, and heaved her bosom, that her chosen knight of the lists was among the three Frenchmen who were undergoing their probation for the honours of chivalry. At that moment, her lover was in all probability at a very short distance from her—her lady-gift still bound the flowing hair of dark auburn she had seen and admired as it escaped from beneath his helm; her power was still exercised in occluding one of the darkest and most brilliant eyes that ever peered through the warrior's visor, and the thought of her then sitting and dreaming of him was perhaps occupying his mind, and filling his heart. Then rose the thrilling thought, that, ere another week passed over, her own hands might be required to unbind the pledge, and the light of the eye that had so long been hid from the sun might first be thrown upon the face of her who bound it. The hazards of a siege were despised by her bold spirit, as it contemplated these glowing visions. She feared nothing for either herself or her father, from men who, while they fought like lions for their country's liberty, were actuated by the high and noble spirit of chivalry. Possessing that confidence in the generosity of noble hearts which seems to be natural to lovely women, she would throw herself on the protection of Bruce himself; claiming that, she could defy all danger from whatever quarter it might come; and her request for safety to her father would be as successful as her petition for herself. In the siege and capture of the town, her best and dearest interests were involved; for she would contemplate the success of great men fighting in a cause she loved, she would have the chance of meeting her lover, and she had the certainty of escaping the licentious Oliphant, who could not claim her in the event of losing his treacherous cause in fighting against his country. The sounds of the clang of arms of the assailants would at that moment have been the sweetest sound she ever heard; and she drew deep sighs as she contemplated the chances of their triumph.

Unconscious of the thoughts that were revolving in the excited mind of his daughter, Peter of Ghent walked along the streets of Perth, till he came to the residence of the Governor. His mind was too much occupied on the subject of his diplomatic undertaking to allow him to notice the gazing burghers who, from their windows, stared at the rich Fleming, and suspected that the object of his expedition was in some way connected with the perilous state of the town. He found the Governor waiting for him; and, having made his bow, was soon seated by the official's fire.

"Well, Peter of Ghent," began Oliphant, "hast thou bethought thyself of my request—to give me the thousand nobles that are required for the support of the town against the arms of the Bruce, whose head deserveth a spear, alongside of that which upholdeth Wallace's, on London Bridge, or whose body meriteth a cage, alongside of the Countess of Buchan's crib, in the Castle of Berwick. What sayest thou?"

"The sum thou mentionest, Sir Governor," replied the cunning burgher, "hath been laid apart for the tocher of Anne, who meriteth well of the good consideration thou hast bestowed on her. The marriage dower is a sacred gift. Dost thou think as well of her now as formerly?"

"Why, yes, Peter of Ghent, I do," replied Oliphant, who probably saw some obscure connection between Peter's sentences which the words themselves scarcely supplied. "No man with a heart could see that maiden once and forget her ever. Less beautiful women have been the cause of the meeting of bleeding heads and sawdust; and thou wilt not be far beyond the Saracen's head of thy suspicion, if thou deemest me a lover of fair Anne of Ghent."

"That I have had a fair cause to suspect," said Peter; "and I am well entitled to opine that Anne would give her consent to my paying the sum required of me, upon the consideration that it was merely a species of foreinstalment of dowry, given for the double purpose of saving the town and securing a governor of her heart. A man that can defend, so nobly as you have done, a walled city, could keep a woman's heart in good discipline."

"A right fair point of dialects, Peter of Ghent," replied Oliphant; "but we had better speak of concernments of love after the city is saved. Let us have the nobles in the meanwhile, and we will discuss the merits of the fair Anne when we have time and leisure to appreciate the qualities of womankind."

"Well and veritably indited," said Peter; "but it would lubricate and facilitate the gaining of Anne's consent to the payment of this money, if I could report to her that it was to be paid as a matrimonial propine to the man she loveth; and, to be honest, I cannot, of a truth, pay it, but upon that stipulation."

"And, by the honour of a governor! I am well pleased to think that I am thus estimated by so fair a creature. Let us have the money; and, if all goes well with the town, I shall look for a second tocher, of another thousand, with the hand of thy daughter."

"Concluded, Sir Governor," cried Peter, in ecstasy.

And the two sat down to finish, over a bottle of Burgundy, the details of a bargain which, on one side, was, at least, sincere; but, on the other, was deemed, by those who knew the faithless character of the man, of, at least, dubious faith. Whatever sincerity, however, was felt and exhibited by Peter, in so far as concerned the Governor, it was very clear that he had acted a part of true mercantile subtlety, in so far as regarded the interests of his fair daughter. Meanwhile, the money was paid, and extraordinary efforts were made by Oliphant to get foraging parties sent abroad, to procure, for the inhabitants, the necessary supplies. The motions of these troops, as well as those of the besiegers, were regularly noticed by Anne from a part of the wall to which she had access from her father's house. Her interest in the issue of the impending strife was the greatest that could be felt by woman; for it involved the dearest rights of her sex. Bound to Oliphant only in the event of his success, his defeat might bring to her the object of her affections, and she looked for every demonstration of activity on the part of Bruce as a sign of her coming liberation.

During these watchful operations of the fair Fleming, the soldiers of Bruce remained steady at their post, where they had already been for five weeks, endeavouring to prevent any supplies from being sent into the town. Their numbers as yet, however, were so few, and the fortifications of Perth so extensive, that a considerable portion of the ground surrounding the town was left under the surveillance of a species of riding patrole, which the indefatigable endeavours of Oliphant sometimes succeeded in enabling the purveyors to elude. A like good fortune did not attend some of those sent to turn the merks of Peter of Ghent into edibles; for several foragers were intercepted in their passage from the country to the besieged city. One of these—a person called Giles Mortimer—was taken before Bruce, and examined as to the state of the town's provisions.

"Well, sirrah, are these rebels still determined to hold out?" said the King.

"There are many murmurs in the town, sire," replied the man; "and were it not, as fame reporteth, that a rich citizen hath given the Governor a thousand Flemish nobles, on condition that he marry his daughter, I do believe that not another noble would have been wrung from any one in the whole city."

"And what is the name of this rich citizen?" said Bruce.

"How could it be any other than Peter of Ghent?" said the man, with a smile—"for, is he not the richest citizen of Perth?"

"We have heard of this same Peter of Ghent," said Bruce; "and, by our crown, we should not be ill-pleased to be present at the wedding of his daughter. We have some French knights here, who would dance merrily, in honour of the fair bride. What is her name?"

"Anne of Ghent she is called," replied the man; "and, by'r lady, she might, for the matter of beauty, be the wife of a king."

"And when is the wedding to be?" rejoined Bruce.

"When the Governor can declare the town to be safe from the Bruce," replied the man.

"And that will be when the hares in the pass of Ben Cruachan are safe from the wolves of Lorn," replied Bruce, laughing and looking around to his chiefs. "Now, look around you, sir, at these warriors, and after thou hast made a gage of their numbers, and learned that every castle we have yet attempted hath fallen before us, go and tell William Oliphant that we intend to be present at his wedding with the fair Anne of Ghent, and cannot think of waiting either for the succours of King Edward, or for our own defeat. Hie thee on our message, sirrah."

The man was accordingly liberated; and Bruce, during that same day, having resolved to perform by stratagem what seemed to be impossible by the fair play of arms, took with him Sir James Douglas, and went to reconnoitre. Great and even marvellous as was the courage of these far-famed assertors of their country's freedom, it may be doubted whether their genius for daring and successful stratagem did not excel the chivalrous spirit of fair-fighting by which they were actuated to perform deeds of arms that have made the whole world ring with their fame. The capture of the peel or castle of Linlithgow, and that of Edinburgh, afterwards performed, were the most cunningly devised pieces of military stratagem that had ever been witnessed; and the work of old Polyænus on the warlike acts of the strategists of Greece exhibits nothing that can be compared to them. Bruce had already exhibited this talent for scheming, in the affairs of Lindon Hill and Cruachan Ben; but his powers in this respect were yet to be developed on a grander scale, and as it were by gradation, till the final triumph of Bannockburn should establish his fame for ever. The capture of Perth was one of those intermediate and probationary trials that were fitting the great master for that final and glorious display of all his [illegible] for war; but, small as it was in comparison of what followed, it exhibited perhaps as much of his peculiar genius as had yet been shewn. Accompanied by Sir James, he went, during the hours of twilight, up to the margin of the fosse.

"We must know the depth of this miniature Styx," he said to his companion.

"But we have no measuring-rods," replied Sir James.

"By thine own St Bride! we have though," replied Bruce, smiling: "I am six feet two inches in height. And, in an instant, he was up to the neck in the water; proceeding forward, he reached the bottom of the wall, and satisfied himself that all the tall men of his army might make their way through the ditch without incurring the danger of being drowned. Having ascertained this, he returned to the camp, and having provided himself and his companion (for he avoided any show of men) with scaling-ladders of ropes, they again sallied forth under the shade of the increasing darkness, and reached the spot that had already been tested. With one of the ladders in his hand, he again plunged into the water, and made a signal for Sir James to follow; but the knight wanted full two inches of the height of the king, and hesitated a moment, from a well-grounded suspicion that he would be overwhelmed. But shame mastered his scruples, and in an instant he was alongside of the King, who however required to seize and sustain him, to prevent his being taken off his feet by the power of the water, that was almost on a level with his lips. They paused a moment in this position, to listen if there were any sounds of stir on the walls, and, perceiving all quiet, they proceeded, and reached the bottom of the fortification. Sir James stood close to the wall, and Bruce, by the aid of some jutting stones, mounted upon his shoulders, remarking with a quaint humour, that the knight required some weight to be placed upon him to enable him to keep his erect position. In this strange attitude, the king contrived to throw up and fix the ladders to the top of the first bartizan of the wall, and having tugged them with all his force, to ascertain their stedfastness, he came down, and was about to retrace his steps, when Sir James, who disdained to be behind even his king in feats of daring, seized the end of one of the ladders, and, mounting up,

looked calmly over the top of the wall, and satisfied himself of two things—first, that the ladders were properly fixed; and, second, that their daring act had not been observed. Having descended, he was again laid hold of by the King; and they reached the bank, where they deliberately shook the water off them after the manner of water-spaniels, and returned to the camp.

Some of the heads of the army were informed of what had been done, and, next morning, after all the inhabitants of the town were astir, the clarion was sounded, loud and long, as if the city had been upon the instant to be attacked. The tents were struck; but, in place of an attack, a retreat was the order of the day, and in the course of an hour, the whole Scottish host were beyond the sight of the inhabitants of Perth. The intelligence was soon therefore circulated within the city, that Bruce had given up the siege, and had departed upon some expedition of less difficulty; and the friends of Edward rejoiced that they were liberated from so fearful a foe. The communication was received by many with great rejoicings; and a courier who arrived that same day from England, announced that Edward had dispatched succours to the city, which would arrive in the Tay nearly as soon as the messenger would reach the end of his journey. To Peter of Ghent, this change of circumstances was the apparent prelude to the honours he expected to be showered upon his daughter; but Anne herself, dreaming still of her monoculous knight, and of her anticipated delivery by the champions she desired so ardently to see, looked forward with fear and trembling to the sacrifice that seemed to await her. Her watching at the city walls had been persevered in; but all her care and perspicacity had not enabled her to perceive the strange act of Bruce in suspending the ladder before sounding a retreat. The guarding of the walls was in some degree relaxed, and the inhabitants began again to go forth, and engage in their avocations. About three days afterwards, the handmaid of the fair Fleming, who was in the secret of her mistress, informed her, that, as she returned from a meeting, near the fortifications, with her lover, a soldier, she had observed the top of a rope ladder affixed to the lower bartizan of the west wall; but the girl's information ended with the announcement of the fact, for her simple mind had suggested no explanation of the circumstance. But to Anne's quick thought, the communication presented an aspect pregnant of hope; and, having cautioned the maiden against speaking of what she had seen to any of the inhabitants, she sallied forth in the light of the moon, and by the directions of her informant, soon came to the spot where the ladder was suspended. A train of reflections opened up to her the scheme of Bruce, who had, as she thought, raised the siege, to lull the inhabitants into a security which he might turn to his advantage. By some bold efforts, she reached the part of the wall to which the instrument of escalade was attached, and, in the height of her enthusiasm, she took from her dress a narrow ribbon, and bound it to the top of the ropes.

"The design of these bold spirits," she said, "shall not lack the inspiring gift of a woman to hail, as that favour streameth in the wind, the success of the cause that giveth freedom to their country. If Rolande de Leon may not see this, the eyes of Bruce, that are unbound, may catch a sight of the trophy—and what better evidence may he have, that Anne of Ghent wisheth him triumph?"

After indulging in her short monologue, she retreated from the wall, and, with some difficulty, escaped the eyes of some of the neighbouring guards, as she sought with quick steps the house of her father. As she entered, Peter of Ghent looked at her, as if he would have questioned her as to where she had been at so late an hour; but his mind was too much occupied by matters of greater moment.

"Welcome, my love," said he to her, as she sat down by the fire. "I have been with the Governor, who is full of rejoicing at this unexpected quittance of the Bruce and his host of wolves. The period of the fulfilment of our condition approaches. The succours of Edward are expected every hour; and then, Anne, I have a right to claim for thee a lord, who is worthy of thy beauty and thy goodness."

"The Bruce may return, father," replied Anne. "It is not thus that he resigns his prey."

"That is nothing to thee or to me, Anne," said Peter, somewhat roused. "A knighthood will be the more sure to the Governor; and I should like as well to see that honour bestowed on thy husband as on thy betrothed. Get ready thy marriage gear, love, and lay aside thy maiden blushes, which can aid thee as little in capturing a husband as Bruce's backwardness in the taking of Perth.'

"The Governor hath not claimed me, father," replied Anne, hesitatingly. "He hath not called here since the money was paid to him."

"More still of thy doubtful questionings, wench!" cried Peter, rising in his anger. "What is his remissness to thee, if I adhere to my condition, and demand my bond? He is bound by his honour; to-morrow he is to be here, and thou must shew thy fairest qualities in his presence. Go and assign thee thy appurtenances and paraphernals."

Anne rose silently and left the room; but it was not to obey her father. Her mind was occupied with meditations on the chances of the return of Bruce, upon which her safety from the arms of Oliphant, and her hope of meeting her French knight, depended. Her calculations of the probability of that event were but the operations of her own unaided mind, and misgivings, ushering in painful fears, vindicated a place in her thoughts, and made her alternately the victim of hope and apprehension. She could not retire to rest, and her devotions before the holy virgin were performed with a fluttering heart, that shook off the holy feelings with which she was accustomed to kneel before the sacred image. The moon still shone bright in at the window, and the stillness that reigned within the house told her that the inmates had retired to rest. She felt a strong inclination to go forth, and find that relief which is often experienced by troubled spirits, in the calm beams of the queen of night; and, wrapping around her a mantle, she obeyed the impulse of her feelings. A large garden nearly connected the house with a part of the fortifications; and, having perambulated the open space, she sauntered along till she came to an embrasure, at which she set herself down, and fixed her eyes on the surrounding ground, where she had formerly seen a part of Bruce's besieging forces. She could perceive nothing now but the wide plain, spread forth in the silver light of the moon, and below her feet the deep fosse which reflected the bright beams from its quiet surface. The wind was hushed, and an unbroken silence seemed to reign throughout all nature. A deep train of meditations took possession of her mind; and the sublimed feelings that were called forth by the still and solemn silence around her, mixed with and lent an influence to the thoughts that were ever and anon busy with the hopes that had not yet forsaken her breast. As she sat thus meditating, she thought she observed a dark mass of some moving body upon the plain beyond; and, as she gazed, her attention became more and more fixed upon the extraordinary appearance.

In a short time, the dense mass became more perceptible, and she could now distinguish that it was composed of a body of men, whose motion forward was so noiseless that scarcely a single sound met her ear. There was a small body somewhat in advance of the rest, and she now saw that the direction which they held, was towards the spot where she had seen the instrument of escalade fixed to the

wall. Rising hurriedly, she crept along by the covered way, and was surprised to find that her passage was not interrupted by a single guard, the men having, in consequence of the fatigue to which they had been exposed for five weeks, taken advantage of Bruce's retreat, and betaken themselves to rest. She soon arrived at the spot, and about the same time she observed that the van she had noticed had also got to that part of the fosse opposite to where she was now placed. The silence enabled her now to catch the low tones of the men; and the coruscations of their steel armour, as the moonbeams played upon it, met her eye. She hesitated a moment whether she would remain or retreat; for the terrors of a siege were before her, and her father was in danger; but she felt that her own freedom from a hated union depended upon the success of the besiegers, and the workings of an enthusiastic spirit stilled the whisperings of fear. She bent and listened, for articulate sentences now rose from the warriors, who stood for a moment on the brink of the fosse. A gigantic individual, in full mail, stood in the midst of the group, and he could be no other than Bruce himself, whose height exceeded that of most men of his day.

"Art ready?" said he, as he held forth his spear, the point of which glittered in the moonbeams, as he waved it.

"Ay—on, noble King!" was responded by another behind him.

"Come on, then," again said the former, and immediately he dashed into the water, which seemed to cover his body to the head.

Some of the others appeared to hesitate for a moment.

"What shall we say of our French lords," cried another, in a French accent, "who live at home in the midst of wassail and jollity, when so brave a knight is here putting his life in hazard to win a hamlet?" And he was the second that followed the Bruce.

"Shall a Frenchman, who hath not yet redeemed the sight of his left eye, bound by a lady's pledge, be the second to mount the wall," was said by a third, as he rushed forward. In an instant the whole party were in the water.

Bruce was now on the ladder. He stopped suddenly, and gazed for a moment at the ribbon on the top of the escalade. Anne's voice met his ear.

"Come on, come on, brave warriors," she said, in a low tone.

"Who art thou, in heaven's name?" replied he.

"Anne of Ghent, thy friend. The guard is asleep, and the Governor deemeth thee far away. I claim indemnity in life and limb to Peter of Ghent."

"Granted, noble damsel, by the sword of Bruce!" was he answer; "away—away!—to a place of safety."

Anne lost no time in obeying the command. She flew along the covered way with the quickness of light. In her speed she stumbled on the feet of a soldier who lay in a recess of the ramparts, and was almost precipitated to the ground. The man looked up in agitation, and, seeing that it was a woman, growled out a few incoherent sentences, and again resigned himself to sleep, from which he might awake only to feel the sharp steel of a Scotch dagger, as it sought his heart. She paused a little, to satisfy herself that the man was not sufficiently roused to hear the sounds of the assailants, and, finding all safe, she sought hurriedly the dwelling of her father. He was sound asleep when she entered, and there was no one stirring; but the sounds of horns were now ringing through the city, and, as she opened the door of his sleeping apartment, the clamour roused him. Starting to his feet, he called out to Anne to know the cause of the disturbance.

"The Bruce is in the act of storming the city, father," she said.

"Then are the dreams of my ambition finished," replied Peter, "and we shall be the marks for the vengeance of these savages. I have no chance of escape. My money is gone, and the reward that will be given for it will be death."

"Fear not, father," said Anne, calmly. "Thou art safe."

"Peter of Ghent," replied he, "who hath furnished money for the support of the city, will be among the first objects of the vengeance of the Bruce. Ha! I hear already the groans of the dying. Whither shall I fly or where shall I conceal myself?"

"Thou canst be safe only in this house," said Anne. "The Bruce hath, by his sword, pledged his faith to me that Peter of Ghent shall be safe in life and limb."

"What meaneth the damsel's strange words?" cried the father. "Art thou mad? Where couldst thou have seen the Bruce?"

"Concern not thyself for that, father," replied she, with the same unperturbed air. "Thou art safe. The Bruce hath said it."

Peter looked at his daughter in blank wonder; and, as the sounds of horns, the clashing of swords, and the screams of the dying met his ear, he trembled and seemed irresolute whether he should repose faith in her words, or take means for his safety. A loud noise now approached the house; the door was burst open, and three naked katherans entered the apartment, with blood-stained swords gleaming in their hands. One of them rushed forwards, and, seizing Peter, was in the act of thrusting the weapon into his bosom.

"He is safe by the word of the Bruce," ejaculated Anne, as she rushed between the soldier and her father.

"His name, then?" cried one of the soldiers behind.

"Peter of Ghent," answered Anne.

The sword of the soldier was dropped in an instant.

"To pe sure he will pe safe if that pe his name," said the man, with a grim smile. "Te Prince has said it. Here, Tuncan, guard this maiden and her father, while I and Tonald will pe after sending te neebours to their lang hames."

With these words the two katherans left the house, and joined the other soldiers, who were careering through the city, and slaying every Anglicised Scot that came in their way. The guard Duncan remained in Peter's house, and sat with grim majesty, surveying in silence the terrified Fleming, who was lost in wonder at what he had seen and heard; for everything appeared to him a mystery. Others of the soldiers burst at intervals into the house, with the intent to slay the inmates; but Duncan silenced them all by the watchword, "Peter of Ghent," and at every demonstration of the charm the worthy burgher seemed more and more surprised. He questioned Anne as to the meaning of the strange effect of his name and of the unlooked for security that it afforded to him who deserved death more than any one in the city, except the Governor himself. But he got small satisfaction from the maiden, for she felt that it was impossible for her to explain the part she acted, without incurring the charge that she had been untrue to the cause of her father, and the rights of the Governor and the King. Neither would Duncan give him any information but what tended rather to increase the mystery; for he merely said, that it was the command of the Bruce that Peter of Ghent should be saved from the general massacre, and guarded safely from the fury of the soldiers by the first man that entered his house. In the midst of this mystery, a suspicion took possession of him, that Bruce wished to save him for a more cruel death, after the siege should be ended; and, notwithstanding of all that Anne could say to him to calm his fears, he still retained doggedly the apprehension, and sighed bitterly as he contemplated his expected fate.

"Thou hast given me no reason, girl," he whispered to her "to satisfy me that I am not reserved for the heading block. Bruce hath, of a verity, heard of the money I lent to the Governor, and thou shalt, by and by, mourn the death of thy father. But what didst thou mean, Anne, by thy statement to the soldier, that I was safe by the word of the Bruce? Was it a device of thy quick fancy to save me from the sword of that man, who weareth no broad cloth on his body, and whose limbs are, of a consequence, as hard as his heart?"

"If thou wilt stand by thy pledge, father," answered Anne, "that I shall not be required to marry Oliphant, now that the city is taken, I will pledge a simple damsel's word, that thou shalt be as safe from the headsman's falchion as thou art from the broad sword of that wild man whose bare limbs terrify me more than the bright steel of the Bruce."

"Of a surety I will stand by my pledge, girl; but I cannot rest satisfied till I hear thy reason for the confidence thou reposest in the clemency of the Scottish leader, whose name is a terror to every enemy of his country."

"Nay, father, I am now trafficking with thee—driving a bargain, as thou sayest," replied she, with a smile, which the still terrified Fleming could not for the soul of him understand. "The bargain is concluded, and I cannot, for my honour, say more, even to my father."

"Tell me, man," cried Peter, to the Highlander, who still stood guarding the door, with the drawn sword in his hand—"tell me, since my daughter will not, what the Bruce intendeth to do with Peter of Ghent, whose name hath operated as a charm on thy ear."

"Hoigh, hoigh, man!" replied Duncan; "ye'll pe trying to get secrets out o' Tuncan Thu Mohr."

"I will give thee money, my brave preserver," rejoined Peter, as he ran forward. "Let me escape, and I will reward thee with ten nobles. Here they are—see, see—it is meet thou shouldst have them, seeing thou wilt get no share of the spoils of the city."

"Keep him securely," whispered Anne, in the ear of the Highlander, "and I will reward thee better on the morrow."

"Thou art mad, Anne. What means the rebellious wench?" cried Peter, angrily. "Thou hast become a trafficker with the enemies of thy father. Henceforth I have no faith in thee. Wilt thou not let me free, good Master More?"

Duncan turned and looked knowingly at Anne, who, he probably thought, was wishing to torment the old merchant.

"To pe surely she will pe keeping her prisoner," said he, in aid of the imputed design of the fair accomplice, and with a twinkle in his eye. "Te auld merchant's head will pe worth more than te ten nobles, she will pe thinking."

"Dost thou not hear, Anne, that I am, as I suspected, doomed to lay my head on the block?" cried Peter, again. "Thou hast, apparently, some power over the savage," he added, in a whisper: "aid me in bribing him, and we may yet escape to Flanders with my wealth, otherwise thou wilt lose thy dowry, and I my head."

"I have told thee that thou art safe, and thou wilt not listen to me," replied she. "Thou oughtst to be thankful for thy condition. Hearest thou not the groans of the dying citizens amidst the loud clang of arms! Thousands are now dying, and thou hast a royal guard to save thee from harm; yet art thou grumbling at thy fate."

During all this time, the work of destruction had been going on in all parts of the city. Bruce was well aware that the great evil he had to cure, could only be overcome by extreme measures, and the better feelings of his nature had for a time given place to the thirst for vengeance for the many wrongs he had suffered from the tyrants who had not only ruined the country but stained his domestic hearth with the cruelties of persecution. He gave orders, on entering the city, that every Scot that had favoured Edward should die; and his command was but too literally obeyed—thousands on that night felt, in the pangs of death, the effects of his dreadful retaliation. When the day dawned, he collected his captains in the court hall of the city, for the purpose of issuing ordinances of confiscation, settling the terms on which the city should in future be held, and passing sentence on the Governor, who had been taken alive, and stood in the hall bound in chains. Bruce sat in the chair of office, his captains were ranged around him, and by his left side sat two of the French squires already spoken of, who had trusted to the events of that siege for getting the leave of the bravest knights of these times, to remove the bandages from their left eyes, and be declared entitled to the rights and honours of chivalry. The scene presented one of the most extraordinary aspect of these times of war and bloodshed. Bruce himself had fought hand to hand with the officers of the garrison, and slain every one who dared to withstand his terrible onset. His face and hands were covered with blood; his bright armour was stained; and the sword which he still held in his hand bore evidence to the work of deadly execution it had done against Scotland's foes. Sir James Douglas, Randolph, and others of the fiercest of his captains, bore the same grim aspect; and the French squires exhibited by their gore-stained shields that they merited the reward for which they looked, from the honour-dispensing sword of the King.

At a table before the king, there sat a man habited as a clerk, with a black cloak over his shoulders, and a small felt cap, that covered the crown of his head. He was busy calling forth the names of the inhabitants who had adhered to the cause of Edward; and, as he repeated them, the King awarded his fiat of confiscation of the effects of the individuals. As the man proceeded, he came to the name of Peter of Ghent, and Bruce paused. The recollections of Anne and her father had been, by the turmoils of the siege, for some time absent from his mind; but now his face glowed as the adventure of the preceding night flashed upon him, and the heroic conduct of the maiden was appreciated in the triumph he was now enjoying. He thought for a moment, and remembered that it was she who was to have been wedded to the Governor. He could not account for the apparent contradiction between this purpose and the conduct of the girl in hailing him on to the siege of the city; but his quick mind at once suggested the solution that she had been hostile to the match, and that it had been projected merely by her father as a part of the transactions of the loan that had been given for the support of the city.

"Let Peter of Ghent, and his fair daughter Anne, be called to our presence," cried the King. And in a short time, the wealthy Fleming, with Anne, who was covered with a deep veil, was led forwards in the midst of the assembled chiefs. It was apparent, from Peter's manner, that he was still actuated by the fear of punishment, for he trembled and shook all over, while Anne, looking at him with side-glances from beneath her veil, seeemed to contemplate him with a mixed feeling of pity and good-humour. Bruce, who was anxious to see the face of the maiden who had acted so noble and fearless a part, would have requested her to lift her veil; but the high-bred feelings inculcated by the peculiar formula of knighthood induced him to wait till he could accomplish the object of his wish after the legitimate manner of the chevaliers. Turning to the trembling culprit, he raised his voice to the highest pitch.

"What does that inhabitant of old Scotland deserve," he said, as he fixed his eyes on Peter, "who giveth his means in aid of rebellion against his crowned king?

Answer us, Peter of Ghent, according to the estimate thou formest of thine own act, in giving to Mr Oliphant, governor of our city, the money wherewith he endeavoured to resist our authority."

Peter was silent, for he was now satisfied that he had been spared to be reserved for the gallows or the heading-axe.

"Speak, sirrah!" cried the Bruce, assuming a more stern tone of authority.

"What it meriteth in the mind of Scotland's lawful King," replied Peter, at length; "but, spare the old father for the sake of his child, and what is left of my substance shall go to support the crown, which a king's leniency to repentant subjects renders the more lustrous."

"Flattery is no atonement for rebellion," thundered out Bruce.

"God have mercy upon me!" cried Peter of Ghent. "Thou knowest, my liege, that I had no power to resist the command of the Governor, when he demanded of me a thousand nobles; nor could I resist thy higher authority, wert thou to ask of me to lay another thousand at this moment at thy royal feet."

"Thou wouldst now even bargain for thy head, as thou didst for the marriage of thy fair daughter," cried Bruce. "Is it not true, sir, that thou didst sell the maiden to the traitor Oliphant?"

"It is even true that I did make it a condition of the advance of the thousand nobles, that he should fulfil the intentions he had manifested towards my daughter; yet I was not the less necessitated to give the money, seeing it would have been taken from me otherwise."

"Then what does the man merit who sells his daughter for the liberties of the country by whose industry and means he liveth?" replied the King. "I put it to the nobles here assembled."

"The heading-block—the heading-block," resounded in hoarse groans through the hall.

"Will she not yet throw off her veil?" muttered the King, as he cast his eyes on Anne.

"Lead Peter of Ghent to the block," he cried aloud.

Anne threw back her veil, and, with her face uncovered, cast herself at the feet of Bruce. The assembled lords fixed their eyes upon the damsel as she occupied a position which exhibited the graces of her perfect figure, and the intelligence of her beautiful face lighted up with feelings which moved the hearts of the sternest warriors around. They were struck with the full blaze of a beauty that was not excelled by the fairest woman of Scotland in her day, and whispers went round among them that told eloquently the effect she had produced by the sudden display of her charms.

"Is this the reward, my liege," she said, in a clear, tuneful voice, "that is due to me for my humble efforts in behalf of the success of thine arms? Is this the faith of the Bruce, whose name has filled the nations as the trumpet resounds within the palisades when honour is to be sought and won?"

A smile played upon the face of the King. The quick, dark eye of the maiden searched his heart, and was satisfied. A mantling blush, accompanied by a smile that seemed to respond to the humour of the King, enhanced her beauty, and shewed that she understood the play that was enacted by the noble monarch.

"It is the privilege of beauty," said the King, still smiling, "to inspire its possessor with an unshaken faith in the sanctions of the brave. We were not oblivious, fair Anne of Ghent, of our promise—as this will testify." And he undid her own ribbon from his arm, and put it around the neck of the supplicant. "The colour of this streamer shall afterwards be that of the banner of Perth. Thy father is safe in life and limb; but tell us, fair damsel, what other method we could have adopted, to gratify our sense of justice and our love of beauty, than to shew thy father that he owes his safety to thee, and to make thee throw off the veil that concealeth so fair a face?"

At this moment, one of the French squires, with his left eye bound up by a green ribbon, advanced to the feet of the King, and stood, for a moment, surveying the countenance of the supplicant.

"By the patron saint of the house of Leon," cried the Frenchman, "it is my fair queen of the lists! Knowest thou this silken band, lady, by which my left orb is occluded, and my affections bound to the giver?"

"If thou art Rolande de Leon," said Anne, as she rose, by the hand of the King, "thou canst tell if that gift was bestowed by my hands. To that valiant squire, Anne of Ghent did once award the humble pledge of a silken band, which was to remain on his temples till he achieved a feat of arms."

"Ha! well timed!" cried Bruce. "Hear the command of thy liege sovereign. We command Anne of Ghent to give the light of heaven to that occluded organ, which is so well entitled to see the glitter of the sword of knighthood, and the charms of her who restores it to its natural rights."

Anne proceeded, amidst the applause of the lords, to obey the commands of the King. With a firm hand, but a palpitating heart, she undid the bandage, as the Frenchman knelt at her feet. "Rise not yet," said Bruce, when he saw the operation concluded; and, taking his sword, he touched the back of the squire, and pronounced the words—"Rise, Sir Rolande de Leon—one of the bravest knights that it has been our good fortune to see fighting under the blue banner of Scotland."

The knight rose, amidst the acclamation of the nobles. The clerk again proceeded with his monotonous vocation of calling out the names of the citizens. Peter, with his daughter, accompanied by Sir Rolande, left the court-room, and proceeded to his house, where, after proper explanations, the Fleming saw no reason to regret the taking of the city. On that same day, William Oliphant was beheaded. The town was quickly restored to order; and, before Bruce's army again set out on a new expedition, Anne of Ghent became the lady of Sir Rolande de Leon.

This brave knight accompanied Bruce through all his engagements, taking frequent opportunities, throughout the wars, of stealing a few days of the society of his fair Anne of Ghent. In a short time he was covered with honours; and, by the end of Scotland's period of direst strife and danger, old Peter of Ghent died, leaving a large fortune to his daughter. The couple, we have reason to believe, retired afterwards to a castle somewhere in Perthshire, to enjoy the peace and happiness of a domestic life, after so many toils and dangers. We have somewhere seen the arms afterwards adopted by the knight, in which *three Lioncels rampant topaz* figure on a *field sapphire, crest,* wreathed with a *ribbon vert.* The wreath we may easily understand; nor can we be at any loss for the derivation of the young Lions, seeing that, according to our authority, Anne bore Sir Rolande three sons, whose descendants, under the name of Lion, long lived in Perthshire; and, if we are not led astray by old writs, they afterwards intermarried with the Lions of Strathmore.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

MAJOR WEIR'S COACH—A LEGEND OF EDINBURGH.*

It was towards the end of September, early in the seventies of the last century, or it might be the end of the sixties—it matters not much as to the year—but it was in the month of September, when parties and politics had set the freemen and burgesses of the Royal Burghs by the ears—when feasting and caballing formed almost their whole employment. The exaltation of themselves or party friends to the civic honours engrossed their whole attention, and neither money nor time was grudgingly bestowed to obtain their objects. The embellishment and improvement of the city of Edinburgh were keenly urged and carried on by one party, at the head of which was Provost Drummond. He was keenly opposed by another, which, though fewer in number, and not so well organized, was not to be despised; for it only wanted a leader of nerve and tact to stop or utterly undo all that had been done, and keep the city, as it had been for more than a century, in a position of stately decay. The wild project of building a bridge over the North Loch was keenly contested; and ruin and bankruptcy were foretold to the good town, if the Provost and his party were not put out of the council before it was begun to be carried into execution.

The heavens were illuminated by a glorious harvest moon, far in her southings; the High Street was deep in shade, like a long dark avenue; the dim oil lamps, perched high upon their wooden posts, few and far between, gleamed in the darkness like glow-worms—as two portly figures were seen in earnest discourse, walking, not with steady step, up the High Street.

By my troth, Deacon!" said one of them, "I fear Luckie Bell has had too much of our company this night. I had no idea it was so late. There is the eighth chime of St Giles': what hour will strike?"

"Deil may care for me, Treasurer Kerr!" hiccuped the Deacon.

"Preserve me, Deacon!" replied the Treasurer, "it has struck twelve! What shall I say to the wife? It's to-morrow, Deacon! it's to-morrow!"

"Whisht, man, whisht! and no speak with such a melancholy voice," said the other. "Are you afraid of Kate? What have we to do with to-morrow? It is a day we shall never see, were we to live as long as Methusalem; for, auld as he was, he never saw 'to-morrow.' It's always to come with its cares or joy." And the Deacon stood and laughed aloud at his conceit. "Let to-morrow care for itself, Tom, say I. What can Kate say to you? What the deil need you care? Have we not had a happy evening? Have we not been well employed?" And they again moved on towards the Castlehill, where the Deacon resided.

Thomas Kerr was treasurer of the Incorporation, and hoped at this election to succeed his present companion, whose influence in the incorporation was great, and to secure which he was, for the time, his humble servant, and assiduous in his attentions to him—so much so, that, although his own domicile was in St Mary's Wynd, at the other extremity of the High Street, his ambition had overcome his fears of his better half, and, still ascending the long street, he resolved to accompany the Deacon home; not, however, without some strong misgivings as to what he might encounter at his return. Both were in that happy state of excitement when cares and fears press lightly on the human mind; but the Deacon, who had presided at the meeting, and spoken a good deal, was much more overcome than his Treasurer; and the liquor had made him loquacious.

"Tom, man," again said the Deacon, "you walk by my side as douce as if you were afraid to meet Major Weir in his coach, on your way down the wynd to Kate. Be cheerful, man, as I am. Tell her she will be Deaconess in a fortnight, and that will quiet her clatter, or I know not what will please her; they are all fond of honours. We have done good work this night—secured two votes against Drummond; other three would graze him. Pluck up your spirit, Tom, and be active; if we fail, the whole town will be turned upside down—confound him, and his wild projects, of what he calls improvements! The deil be in me if I can help thinking—and it sticks in my gizzard yet—that he was at the bottom of the pulling down of my outside stair, by these drunken fellows of masons; the more by token that, when, after much trouble, I discovered them, and had them all safe in the guardhouse, he took a small bail, and only fined them two shillings a-piece, when it caused me an expense of ten good pounds to repair the mischief they had done; and, more than that, I was forced to erect it inside the walls; for they would not allow me to put it as it was, or grant me a Dean of Guild warrant on any other terms. They said it cumbered the foot-pavement, although, as you know, it had stood for fifty years. From that day to this, I have been his firm opponent, in and out of the Council. Tom, are you asleep? Where are your eyes? What high new wall is this? See, see, man!"

"This beats all he has done yet!" said the Treasurer; "a high white wall across the High Street, and neither slap nor style that I can see! Wonderful, wonderful! A strange man that Provost!"

"He has done it to vex me, since I came down to Luckie Bell's," replied the Deacon. "It was not there in the early part of the evening. He must have had a hundred masons at it. But I'll make him repent this frolic to-morrow in the Council, or my name is not Deacon Dickson!"

"What can he mean by it, Deacon?" rejoined the other. "I see no purpose it can serve, for my part."

"But it does serve a purpose," hiccuped the Deacon; "it will prevent me from getting home. It is done through malice against me, for the efforts I am making to get him and his party out of the Council."

* A legend similar to that here given, was current in Glasgow a number of years ago, and for ages before. The hero's name was Bob Dragon, whose income, when alive, was said to have been one guinea a minute. His coachman and horses were said, as those of the Major, to want the heads. The most curious trait of the Glasgow goblin horses, was that they went down to the river to drink, although they had no heads. The superstitions of most European countries have a similar origin: the Germans have their spectre huntsman; the coaches and horses of Major Weir and Bob Dragon are of the same character. The antiquary will find the trial of Major Weir, in Pitcairn's "Criminal Trials;" and the lover of such stories may consult "Satan's Invisible World Discovered."

During the latter part of this discourse, they had walked, or rather staggered, from side to side of the street. Between the pillars that, before the great fires in Edinburgh, formed the base of the high tenement standing there, and St Giles' Church, being the entrance into the Parliament Square, and between St Giles' and the Exchange buildings, the full moon threw a stream of light, filling both the openings, and leaving all above and below involved in deep shade. It was the moon's rays thus thrown upon the ground, and reaching up to the second windows of the houses, that formed the wall which the two officials observed.

"Deil tak me," ejaculated the Deacon, "but this is a fine trick to play upon the Deacon of an incorporation in his own town! Were it not for exposing myself at this untimeous hour, I would raise the town, and pull it down at the head of the people. Faith, Tom, I will do it!" And he was on the point of shouting aloud at the pitch of his voice, when the more prudent Treasurer put his hand upon the mouth of the enraged Deacon.

"For mercy's sake, be quiet!" said he. "What are you going to be about? Is this a time of night for a member of council to make a riot, and expose himself in the High Street? To-morrow will be time enough to pull it down by force, if you cannot get a vote of the Council to authorize it. No doubt it is a round-about way and a sair climb; but just, like a wise and prudent man, as you always are, put up with it for one night, and come along down the Fishmarket Close, up the Cowgate, and climb the West Bow, to the Deaconess, who, I have no doubt, is weary waiting on you."

"Faith, Tom, I am in part persuaded you advise well for once," replied the Deacon; "so I will act upon it, although I am your Deacon, and all advice ought to come from me."

And away they trudged. Both were corpulent men; but the Deacon having been several times in the Council, was by much the heavier of the two. Down they went by the Fishmarket Close, and up the Cowgate, the Deacon, sulky and silent, meditating all the way vengeance against the Provost; but, in ascending the steep and winding Bow, his patience entirely left him; he stopped, more than once, to wipe the perspiration from his brow, recover his breath, and mutter curses on the head of the official. At length, they reached the Deacon's home, where his patient spouse waited his arrival. Without uttering a word, he threw himself upon a chair, placing his hat and wig upon a table. It was some minutes before he recovered his breath sufficiently to answer the questions of his anxious wife, or give vent to the anger that was consuming him. At length, to the fifty times put questions of—

"Deacon, what has vexed you so sorely? what has happened to keep you so late?" he broke forth—

"What vexes me? what has kept me so late? You may, with good reason, inquire that, woman. Our pretty Provost is the sole cause. You may be thankful that you have seen my face this night." And he commenced and gave an exaggerated account of the immense wall that the Provost had caused to be built, from the Crames to the Royal Exchange, reaching as high as the third story of the houses; and the great length of time he had been detained in examining it, to discover a way to get over or through it—all which the simple Deaconess believed, and heartily joined her husband in abusing the Provost.

"Had a wall been built across the Castlehill," she said, "when the Highlandmen were in the town, and the cannon balls flying down the street, I could have known the use of it; but to build a wall between the Crames and the Royal Exchange, to keep the Lawnmarket and Castlehill people from kirk and market—surely the man's mad!"

The Treasurer had been for some time gone ere the worthy couple retired to rest, big with the events that were to be transacted on the morrow, for the downfall of the innovating Provost. The morning was still grey, the sun was not above the horizon, when the Deaconess, as was her wont, arose to begin her household duties; but, anxious to communicate the strange conduct of the Provost, in raising the wall of partition in the city, she seized her water stoups, and hurried to the public well at the Bow-head, to replenish them, and ease her overcharged mind of the mighty circumstance. Early as the hour was, many of the wives of the good citizens were already there, seated on their water stoups, and awaiting their turn to be supplied—their shrill voices mixing with those of the more sonorous tones of the Highland water-carriers, and rising in violent contention on the stillness of the morning, like the confusion of Babel.

The sensation caused by the relation of the Deaconess of her husband's adventure of the preceding evening, was nothing impaired by the story being related at second-hand. Arms were raised in astonishment as she proceeded with her marvellous tale of the high wall built in so short a space by the Provost. After some time spent in fruitless debate, it was agreed that they should go down in a body and examine this bold encroachment upon the citizens—and away they went, with the indignant Deaconess at their head.

For some hundred feet down the Lawnmarket, the buildings of the jail and Luckenbooths hid that part of the street from the phalanx of Amazons; but, intent to reconnoitre where the wall of offence was said to stand, they reached the Luckenbooths, and a shout of laughter and derision burst from the band. The Deaconess stood petrified, the image of shame and anger. No wall was there—everything stood as it had done for years!

"Lucky Dickson," cried one, 'ye hae gien us a gowk's errand. I trow the Deacon has been fu' yestreen. Where is the fearfu wa' ye spak o', that he neither could get through nor owre? Ha! ha! ha!"

"Did ye really believe what he told you, Mrs Dickson?" screamed another. "It was a silly excuse for being owre late out with his cronies. He surely thinks you a silly woman to believe such tales. Were my husband to serve me so, I would let him hear of it on the deafest side of his head."

"You need not doubt but that he shall hear of it," responded the Deaconess; "and that before long. But, dear me, there must have been some witchcraft played off upon him and the Treasurer last night; for, as true as death, they baith said they saw it with their een. There's been glamour in it. I fear Major Weir is playing more tricks in the town than riding his coach. There was no cause to tell me a lie as an excuse, for I am always happy to see him come hame safe at ony hour."

By this time they had returned to the well, where they resumed their water vessels and hurried home, some to report the strange adventure the Deacon had encountered the evening before, and the Deaconess to tell her better half of the delusion he had been under. Before breakfast time, the story was in every one's mouth, from the Castle to the Abbey-gate, and as far as the town extended. On a clear moonlight night, for many years afterwards, Deacon Dickson's dike was pointed out by the inhabitants; and at jovial parties, we have heard it said—"Sit still a little longer; we are all sober enough to get over Deacon Dickson's wall."

The Treasurer, who was not so muddled by the effect of the evening's entertainment as the Deacon, yet still impressed by the idea of the wall, proceeded homewards by the same route whereby he had reached the Deacon's, but now much refreshed by the walk, and night, or rather morning air—for it was nearly one o'clock. As he approached the Bow-foot Well, the sobbing of a female broke the stillness of the night: he paused for a few minutes, and,

looking towards the spot from whence the sound came, urged by humanity, he drew more near, till he perceived an aged female almost concealed by the dark shade of the well, against which she leaned to support herself. As soon as he saw her distinctly, with an emotion of grief and surprise he exclaimed—

"Mrs Horner!—what has happened? Why are you here at this untimeous hour?—or what is the cause of your grief?"

"Thomas Kerr," replied she, "I am a poor unfortunate woman, whom God alone can help. Pass on, and leave me to my misery." And she buried her face in her hands, while the large drops of anguish welled through her withered fingers.

"I cannot leave you here in such a state," said he again. "Come home, my good woman, and I shall accompany you."

"I have no home," was her sad reply. "Alas! I have no home, but the grave. I am a poor, silly, undone woman, in my old age. Comfortable, and even rich as I was, I am now destitute. I have neither house nor hall to cover my grey hairs. Oh, if I were only dead and buried out of this sinful world, to hide the shame of my own child. An hour is scarce passed since I thought my heart would burst in my bosom before I would be enabled to reach the Grey-friars' Churchyard, to lay my head upon Willie Horner's grave, and the graves of my innocent babes that sleep in peace by his side. I feared my strength would fail; for all I wish is to die there. I did reach the object of my wish, and laid myself upon the cold turf, and prayed for Death to join as he had separated us; but my heart refused to break, and tears that were denied me before, began to stream from my eyes. The fear of unearthly sights came strong upon me, stronger even than my grief. Strange moanings and sounds came on the faint night wind, from Bloody Mackenzie's tomb, and the bright moonlight made the tombstones look like unearthly things. I rose and fled. I will tarry here, and die in sight of the gallows stone; for it was here my only brother fell, killed by a shot from cruel Porteous' gun; and on the fatal tree which that stone is meant to support, my grandfather cheerfully gave his testimony for the covenanted rights of a persecuted kirk. Leave me, Thomas Kerr—leave me to my destiny. I can die here with pleasure; and it is time I were dead. To whom can a mother look for comfort or pity, when her own son has turned her out upon a cold world? I am as Rachel mourning for her children. I will not be comforted." And the mourner wrapped her mantle round her head with the energy of despair, and, bending it upon the well, burst anew into an agony of sobs and tears.

The Treasurer felt himself in an awkward situation. He paused, and began to revolve in his mind what was best to be done at the moment—whether to obey the widow or the dictates of humanity. His better feeling prompted him to stay and do all in his power for the mourner, whom he had known in happier times; but his caution and avarice, backed by the dread of his spouse, urged him, with a force he felt every moment less able to resist, to leave her and hurry home. As he stood irresolute, the voice of the stern monitor sounded in the auricles of his heart like the knell of doom, and roused into fearful energy feelings he had long treated lightly, or striven to suppress when they rose upon him with greater force. He ran like a guilty criminal from the spot. The wailings of the crushed and pitiable object he had left, had given them a force he had never before known, and he urged his way down the Cowgate head as if he wished to fly from himself—the traces of the evening's enjoyments having fled, and their place being supplied by the pangs of an awakened conscience. There was, indeed, too much cause for his agitation, often hinted at by his acquaintances, but in its full extent only known in his own family—a striking similarity between the situation of his own mother and that of Widow Horner. The cases of the two aged individuals agreed in all points, save that he had not yet turned her out of doors; and conscience told him that even that result had been prevented, more by the patient endurance of his worthy parent herself, than any kindly feeling upon the part of her son.

The father of the Treasurer, and the husband of Widow Horner, had both been industrious, and, for their rank in life, wealthy burgesses of the city. At their death, they had left their widows with an only child to succeed them and be a comfort to their mothers, who had struggled hard to retain and add to the wealth, until their sons were of age to succeed and manage it for themselves. Their sole and rich reward, as they anticipated, would be the pleasure of witnessing the prosperity of their sons. That they would be ungrateful, was an idea so repugnant to their maternal feelings, that, for a moment, it was never harboured in their bosoms. A cruel reality was fated to falsify their anticipations.

The Treasurer had, before he was twenty-five years of age, married a female, whom his fond mother had thought unworthy of her son; and to prevent the marriage she had certainly done all that lay in her power. Her endeavours and remonstrances had only served to hasten the event she wished so much to retard and hinder from taking place; the consequence was, that the hated alliance was made several weeks before she was made aware of it by the kindness of a gossiping neighbour or two. Much as she felt, and sore as her heart was wrung, she, like a prudent woman, shed her tears of bitter anguish at the want of filial regard in her son, in secret. She at once resolved to pardon this act of ingratitude, and, for her son's sake, to receive her unwelcome daughter-in-law with all the kindness she could assume on the trying occasion. Not so her daughter-in-law, who was of an overbearing, subtile, and vindictive turn of mind. The mother of her husband had wounded her pride; she resolved never to forget or forgive; and, before she had crossed her threshold, a deep revenge was vowed against her as soon as it was in her power to execute it. The first meeting was embarrassing on both sides; each had feelings to contend against and disguise; yet it passed off well to outward appearance—the widow from love to her son, striving to love his wife—the latter, again, with feigned smiles and meekness, affecting to gain her mother-in-law's esteem; and so well did she act her part, that, before many days after their first interview had passed, Thomas was requested to bring his wife into the house, to reside in the family, and to save the expense of a separate establishment. From that hour the house of Widow Kerr began to cease to be her own, for the first few months almost imperceptibly. Thomas, although a spoiled child, was not naturally of an unfeeling disposition, but selfish and capricious from over-indulgence. Amidst all his faults, there was still a love and esteem of his mother, which his wife, seeing it would be dangerous openly to attack, had resolved to undermine, and therefore laid her wicked schemes accordingly. In the presence of her husband, she was, for a time, all smiles and affability; but, in his absence, she said and did a thousand little nameless things, to tease and irritate the good old dame. This produced complaints to her son, who, when he spoke to his wife of them, was only answered by her tears and lamentations, for the misery she suffered in being the object of his mother's dislike. To himself she referred, if she did not do all in her power to please his mother. These scenes had become of almost daily occurrence, and were so artfully managed, that the mother had the appearance of being in the fault. Gradually the son's affection became deadened towards his parent · she had ceased to complain, and now suffered

in silence. For her there was no redress—for, in a fit of fondness, she had made over to her son all she possessed in the world; she was thus in his power; yet her heart revolted at exposing his cruelty. The revenge of the wife was not complete even after the spirit of the victim was completely crushed, and she had ceased to complain. Often the malignant woman would affect lowness of spirits, and even tears, refusing to tell the cause of her grief until urged by endearments, and obtaining an assurance that he would not regard her folly in yielding to her feelings; but she could not help it—were it not for her love to him, she knew not in what she had ever offended his mother, save in preferring him to every other lover who had sought her hand. Thus, partly by artifice, but more by her imperious turn of mind, which she had for years ceased to conceal, the Treasurer was completely subdued to her dictation; and, by a just retribution, he was punished for his want of filial affection, for he was as much the sufferer from her temper as his mother was the victim of her malice. With a crushed heart, the old woman ate her morsel in the kitchen, moistened by her tears. Even her grandchildren were taught to insult and wound her feelings. So short-sighted is human nature, the parents did not perceive that by this proceeding they were laying rods in pickle for themselves, which, in due time, would be brought in use, when the recollection of their own conduct would give tenfold poignancy to every blow.

On the occasion to which we have alluded, the situation and wailings of Widow Horner still rung in the ears of the Treasurer. All his acts of unkindness to his parent passed before him like a hideous phantasmagoria as he hurried down the Cowgate. He even became afraid of himself, as scene after scene arose to his awakened conscience—all the misery and indignities that had been heaped upon his parent by his termagant wife, he himself either looking on with indifference, or supporting his spouse in her cruelty. Goaded by remorse, he still hurried on. The celerity of his movements seemed to relieve him. He had formed no fixed resolution as to how he was to act upon his arrival at home. A dreamy idea floated in his tortured mind that he had some fearful act to perform to ease it, and do justice to his parent; yet, as often as he came to the resolution to dare every consequence, his courage would again quail at the thought of encountering one who had, in all contentions, ever been the victor, and riveted her chains the more closely around him on every attempt he had made to break them. In this pitiable state, he had got as far towards home as the foot of the College Wynd, when the sound of a carriage approaching rapidly from the east roused him and put all other thoughts to flight. With a start of horror and alarm, he groaned—"The Lord have mercy upon me! The Major's coach! If I see it, my days are numbered." And, with an effort resembling the energy of despair, he rushed into a stair foot, and, placing both his hands upon his face to shut out from his sight the fearful object, supported himself by leaning upon the wall. As the sound increased, so did the Treasurer's fears; but what words can express his agony when it drew up at the foot of the very stair in which he stood, and a sepulchral voice issued from it—

"Is he here?"

'Just come," was the reply in a similar tone.

"Then all's right."

"O God! have mercy on my sinful soul!" screamed the Treasurer, as he sank senseless out of the foot of the stair upon the street.

How long he remained in this state, or what passed in the interval, he could give no account. When he awoke to consciousness, he found himself seated in a carriage, jolting along at a great speed, supported on each side by what appeared to him headless trunks; for the bright moonlight shone in at the carriage window, and exhibited two heads detached from their bodies dangling from the top. The glance was momentary. Uttering a deep groan, he shut his eyes to avoid the fearful sight. He would have spoken; but his palsied tongue refused to move, even to implore for mercy. Wringing his hands in despair, he would have sunk to the bottom of the coach upon his knees, but was restrained by the two figures. He felt their grasp upon his arms, firm as one of his own vices. The same fearful voice he had first heard fell again on his ear—"Sit still. Utter no cry. Make a clean breast, as you hope for mercy at the Major's tribunal. He knows you well; but wishes to test your truth. Proceed!"

With a memory that called up every deed he had ever done, and sunk to nothingness any of the actions he had at one time thought good, he seemed as if he now stood before his Creator. All his days on earth appeared to have been one long black scene of sin and neglected duties. His head sunk upon his breast, and the tears of repentance moistened his bosom. When he had finished his minute confession, a pause ensued of a few minutes. The moon, now far in the west, was sinking behind a dense mass of clouds. The wind began to blow fitfully, with a melancholy sound, along the few objects that interrupted its way, and around the fearful conveyance in which he sat, more dead than alive. The measured tramp of the horses, and rattling of the carriage, fell on his ear like the knell of death. He felt a load at his heart, as if the blood refused to leave it and perform its functions. Human nature could not have sustained itself under such circumstances much longer. The carriage stopped; the door opened with violence; his breathing became like a quick succession of sobs; his ears whizzed, almost producing deafness. Still he was fearfully awake to every sensation; a painful vitality seemed to endow every nerve with tenfold its wonted activity; all were in action at the moment; his whole frame tingled; and the muscles seemed to quiver on his bones. The same hollow voice broke the silence.

"Thomas Kerr, your sincerity and contrition has delivered you from my power this once. Beware of a relapse. Go, do the duty of a son to your worthy parent. You have been a worse man than ever I was on earth. I have my parent's blessing with me in the midst of my sufferings; and there is a soothing in it which the wretched can alone feel."

Quick as thought he was lifted from the coach and seated upon the ground. With the speed of a whirlwind, as it appeared to him, the carriage disappeared, and the sound died away. For some time he sat bewildered, as if he had fallen from the clouds. Gradually he began to breathe more freely, and felt as if a fearful nightmare had just passed away. Slowly the events of the night rose in regular succession. The forlorn and desolate widow; the hideous spectres in the coach, that, without heads, spake and moved with such energy—the whole now passed before him so vividly that he shuddered. At first he hoped all had been a fearful dream; but the cold, damp ground on which he sat banished the fond idea. He felt, in all its force, that he was now wide awake, as he groped with his hands and touched the damp grass beneath him. All around was enveloped in impenetrable darkness. Not one star shone in the murky sky. How much of the night had passed, or where he at present was, he had no means to ascertain. The first use he made of his restored faculties, was to rise upon his knees, and pour out his soul to God, imploring pardon and protection in this hour of suffering. He rose with a heart much lightened, and felt his energies restored. Stumbling onwards, he proceeded, he knew not whither, until, bruised by falls and faint from exhaustion, he again seated himself upon a stone, to wait patiently the approach of dawn. Thus, melancholy and pensive, he sat,

eager to catch the faintest sound; but all was silent as the grave, save the faint rustling of the long grass waving around him in the night breeze that was chilling his vitals, as it, in fitful gusts, swept past him. The hope of surviving the night had almost forsaken him, when the distant tramp of a horse fell on his longing ears. Then the cheerful sound of a popular air, whistled to cheer the darkness, gladdened his heart. In an ecstasy of pleasure, he sprung to his feet. The rolling of wheels over the rugged road, was soon added to the cheering sounds. With caution he approached them over hedge and ditch, until, dark as it was, he could discern the object of his search almost before him—a carrier's cart, with the driver seated upon the top, whistling and cracking his whip to the time.

"Stop friend, for mercy's sake, and take me up beside you."

"Na, na," replied the carrier; "I will do no such foolish action. Hap, Bassie! hap!" And, smacking his whip, the horse increased its speed. "Come not near my cart, or I will make Cæsar tear you in pieces. Look to him, Cæsar!" And the snarling of a dog gave fearful warning to the poor Treasurer to keep at a distance; but, rendered desperate by his situation, he continued to follow, calling out—

"Stop, if you are a Christian, for mercy's sake, stop and hear me. I am a poor lost creature, sick and unable to harm, but rich enough to reward you, if you will save my life. I am no robber, but a decent burgess and freeman of Edinburgh; and where I am at present I cannot tell."

"Woo, Bassie! woo!" responded the carrier. "Silence, Cæsar! Preserve us from all evil! Amen! Sure you cannot be Thomas Kerr, whose shop is in Saint Mary's Wynd?"

"The very same; but who are you that know my voice?"

"Who should I be," rejoined he, "but Watty Clinkscales, the North-Berwick carrier, on my way to the town; for you may know well enough that Wednesday morning is my time to be in Edinburgh; but come up beside me, man, and do not stand longer there. If you have lost yourself, as you say, I will with pleasure give you a ride home this dark morning; but tell me how, in all the world, came you to be standing at the Figgate Whins, instead of being in your warm bed? I am thinking, friend Kerr, you have been at a corporation supper last night."

While the carrier was speaking, the Treasurer mounted the cart, and took his seat beside him. They moved slowly on. To all the questions of the carrier, evasive answers were returned; the Treasurer felt no desire to be communicative. As they reached the Watergate, the first rays of morning shone upon Arthur's Seat and the Calton Hill. Before they entered, the Treasurer dismounted, having first rewarded his conveyer to the town, and proceeded to his home by the South Back of the Canongate, faint and unwell. When he reached his own door, he was nearly exhausted. It was opened to him by his anxious mother, who had watched for him through the whole night. Alarmed by his haggard and sickly appearance, timidly she inquired what had happened to him, to cause such an alteration in his looks in so short a time. The tears started into his eyes as he looked at her venerable form, degraded by her attire. He took her hand in both his, and, pressing it to his lips, faltered out—

"Oh, my mother! can you pardon your undutiful son? Only say you will forgive me."

"Tammy, my bairn," she replied, "what have I to pardon? Is not all my pleasure in life to see you happy? What signifies what becomes of me the few years I have to be on earth? But you are ill, my son—you are very ill!"

"I am indeed very unwell, both in body and mind," said he. "Say you pardon me, for the manner in which I have allowed you to be treated since my marriage; and give me your blessing, lest I die without hearing you pronounce it."

"Bless you, my Thomas, and all that is yours, my son! with my blessing, and the blessing of God, which is above all riches! But go to your bed, my bairn, and do not let me make dispeace in the family."

At this moment his spouse opened the door of the bedroom, and began, in her usual manner, to rate and abuse him for keeping untimeous hours. Still holding his mother's hands in his, he commanded her, in a voice he had never before assumed to her, to be silent. She looked at him in amazement, as if she had doubted the reality of his presence; and was on the point of becoming more violent, when his fierce glance, immediately followed by the sunken, sickly look which one night of suffering had given him, alarmed her for his safety, and she desisted, anxiously assisting his mother to undress and put him to bed.

He soon fell into a troubled sleep, from which he awoke in the afternoon, unrefreshed and feverish. His wife was seated by his bed when he awoke. Turning his languid eye towards her, he inquired for his mother. A scene of angry altercation would have ensued; but he was too ill to reply to the irritating language and reproaches of his spouse. The anger increased his fever, and delirium came on towards the evening. A physician was sent for, who at once pronounced his life to be in extreme danger; and, indeed, for many days it was despaired of.

The horrors of that night were the theme of his discourse while the fever raged in his brain. The smallest noise, even the opening of a door, made him shriek and struggle to escape from those who watched him. His efforts were accompanied by cries for mercy from Major Weir; his bed was the coach, and his wife and mother the headless phantoms. Clinkscales had told the manner and where he had found him, on the morning he was taken ill. The sensation this excited through the city became extreme. Deacon Dickson told the hour in which he left his house, and the language of the sufferer filled up the space until he was met by the carrier. The nocturnal apparition of the Major's carriage had, for many years, been a nursery tale of Edinburgh. Many firmly believed in its reality. There were not awanting several who affirmed they had seen it; and scarce an inhabitant of the Cowgate or St Mary's Wynd, but thought they had heard it often before the present occurrence.

That the Treasurer had by some means been transported to the Figgate Whins in the Major's coach, a great many firmly believed; for two of the incorporation, on the same night, had been alarmed by a coach driving furiously down the Cowgate; but they could not describe its appearance, as they had hid themselves until it passed, fearful of seeing the spectre carriage and its unearthly attendants. It was at least certain that, of late, many had been aroused out of their sleep by the noise of a carriage; and, the report gaining ground, the terror of the citizens became so great that few chose to be upon any of the streets after twelve at night, unless urged by extreme necessity. This state of foolish alarm, as the magistrates called it, could not be allowed to continue within their jurisdiction; and they resolved to investigate the whole affair. Several were examined privately; but the Treasurer was too ill to be spoken to, even by his friend the Deacon. There was a strange harmony in the statements of several who had really distinctly heard the sounds of horses' feet, and the rumbling of a carriage, and the ravings of the unfortunate Treasurer. The authorities were completely at a stand how to proceed. Several shook their heads, and looked grave;

others proposed to request the ministers of the city to watch the Major's carriage, and pray it out of the city. But the Provost's committee sent for the captain of the train-bands, and consulted with him: he agreed to have twelve of the band and six of the town-guard in readiness by twelve at night, to waylay the cause of annoyance, should it make its appearance, and unravel the mystery. That there was some unlawful purpose connected with it, several of the Council had little doubt. These meetings were private, and the proceedings are not on record to guide us. It was with considerable difficulty the captain could get the number of his band required for the duty; they chose rather to pay the fine, believing it to be a real affair of diabelerie; for their earliest recollections were associated with the truth of the Major's night airings. For several nights the watch was strictly kept by many of the citizens; but in vain. No appearance disturbed the usual stillness of the night in the city; not even the sound of a carriage was heard. The whole affair gradually lost its intense interest, and ceased to be the engrossing theme of conversation. The sceptics triumphed over their believing acquaintance; and the mysterious occurrence was allowed to rest.

The election week for Deacon of the Crafts at length arrived. All was bustle among the freemen; the rival candidates canvassing and treating, and their partisans bustling about everywhere. City politics ran high; but the Treasurer, although recovered, was still too weak to take an active part in the proceedings. Deacon Dickson, on this account, redoubled his exertions—for the indisposition of his Treasurer had deranged his plans; and it was of great importance, in his eyes, to have one of his party elected in his place. Had Kerr been able to move about, to visit and flatter his supporters, his election was next to certain, so well had the whole affair been managed. Kerr was accordingly dropped by him, and a successor pitched upon, who could at this eventful period aid him in his efforts against the candidate of the Drummondites, as the supporters of the Provost were called.

On the Thursday, when the long lists were voted, the Deacon carried his list, and every one of the six were tried men, and hostile to the innovations of the Provost and his party. The Deacon was in great spirits, and told the Treasurer, whom he visited as soon as his triumph was secure, that, if not cut off the list, in shortening the leet, his election was sure. On the list coming down from the Council, neither Kerr nor the person Dickson wished were on the leet; both had been struck off, and the choice behoved to fall upon one of three, none of whom had hoped, at this time, to succeed to office. Their joy was so much the greater, and the election dinner not less substantial.

It was the evening of the election, closely bordering upon the morning—for all respected the Sabbath Day, and, even on this joyous occasion, would not infringe upon it—that a party of some ten or twelve were seen to issue from one of the narrow closes in the High Street, two and two, arm in arm, dressed in the first style of fashion, with bushy wigs, cocked hats, and gold-headed canes. At their head was, now Old Deacon Dickson, and his successor in office. They were on their way, accompanying their new Deacon home to his residence, near the foot of Saint Mary's Wynd in the Cowgate, and to congratulate the Deaconess on her husband's elevation to the Council. None of them were exactly tipsy; but in that middle state when men do not stand upon niceties, neither are scared by trifles. The fears of the Major's coach were not upon them; or, if any thought of it came over them, their numbers gave them confidence. Leaving the High Street, they proceeded down Merlin's Wynd to the Cowgate. Scarce had the head of the procession emerged from the dark thoroughfare, when the sound of a carriage, in rapid advance, fell on their astonished ears. The front stood still, and would have retreated back into the Wynd, but could not; for those behind, unconscious of the cause of the stoppage urged on and forced them out into the street. There was not a moment for reflection, scarce to utter a cry, before the fearful equipage was full upon them. Retreat was still impossible; and those in front, by the pressure from behind, becoming desperate by their situation, the two Deacons seized the reins of the horses, to prevent their being ridden over. In a second, the head of the coachman (held in his hand!) was launched at Deacon Dickson, with so true an aim that it felled him to the ground, with the loss of his hat and wig. Though stunned by the blow, his presence of mind did not forsake him. Still holding on by the reins, and dragged by the horses, he called lustily for his companions to cut the traces. The head of the coachman, in the meantime, had returned to his hand, and been launched forth, with various effect, on the aggressors. Other heads flew from the windows on each side, and from the coach-box, in rapid, darting motions. The cries of the assailants resounded through the stillness of the night; fear had fled their bosoms; there was scarce one but had received contusions from the flying heads, and rage urged them on to revenge. Candles began to appear at the windows, exhibiting faces pale with fear. Some of the bolder of the male inhabitants, recognising the voice of some relative or acquaintance in the cries of the assailants, ran to the street and joined the fray. Dickson, who had never relinquished his first hold, recovered himself, severely hurt as he was by the feet of the horses, which were urged on, short as the struggle was, up to the College Wynd, in spite of the resistance. At the moment the carriage reached the foot of the wynd, the door on the left burst open, and two figures leaped out, disappearing instantly, although closely pursued. In the confusion of the pursuit, the coachman also disappeared. No one could tell how, or in what manner he had fled, he appeared to fall from the box among the crowd; and, when severals stooped to lift and secure him, all that remained in their hands was a great-coat with basket work within the shoulders, so contrived as to conceal the head and neck of the wearer, to which was fastened a stout cord, the other end of which was attached to an artificial head, entangled in the strife between the horses and the pole of the coach. Two similar dresses were also found inside. The coach was heavily laden; but with what, the authorities never could discover, although envious persons said that severals of the tradesmen's wives in the Cowgate afterwards wore silk gowns that had never had one before in their family, had better and stronger tea at their parties, and absolutely abounded in tobacco for many weeks. But whether these were the spoils of the combat with the infernal coach, or the natural results of successful industry, was long a matter of debate.

As for the coach and horses, they became the prize of Deacon Dickson and his friends, never having been claimed by the Major. The sensation created on the following day by the exaggerated reports of the fearful rencounter and unheard of bravery of the tradesmen, was in proportion to the occasion. Several of the assailants were reported to have been killed, and, among the rest, the Deacon. For several days, the inn-yard of the White Hart was crowded to excess to view the carriage and horses. As for the Deacon, no doubt, he was considerably bruised about the legs; but the glory he had acquired was a medicine far more efficacious to his hurts than any the faculty could have prescribed. At the first toll of the bells for church, he was seen descending from the Castle Hill towards the Tron Church, limping much more, many thought, than there was occasion for, supported by his battered gold-headed cane on one side, and holding by the arm of the Deaconess on the other. With an affected modesty, which no General after the most brilliant victory could better have

assumed, he accepted the congratulations he had come out to receive. When he entered the church, a general whisper ran through it, and all eyes were upon him, while the minister had not yet entered. This was the proudest moment of his life. He had achieved, with the assistance of a few friends, what the train-bands and city-guard had failed to acomplish; that it was more by accident, and against his will he had performed the feat, he never once allowed to enter his mind, and stoutly denied when he heard it hinted at by those who envied him the glory he had acquired.

As soon as the afternoon's service was over, he proceeded to the Treasurer's house, to congratulate him on his re-election to the treasurership, and give a full account of his adventure. To his exaggerated account, Kerr listened with the most intense interest; a feeling of horror crept over his frame as the Deacon dwelt upon the blow he had received from the coachman's head, and the efficacious manner in which the two inside phantoms had used theirs, concluding with—

"It was a fearful and unequal strife—devils against mortal men."

"Do you really think they were devils, Deacon? Was it really their own heads they threw about?" said the Treasurer.

"I am not clear to say they were devils," replied the other; "but they fought like devils. Severe blows they gave, as I feel this moment. They could not be anything canny; for they got out from among our hands like a flash of light."

The Deacon's vanity would have tempted him to say he believed them to be not of this earth; but the same feeling restrained him. Where there had been so many actors in the affair, he had as yet had no opportunity of learning their sentiments; and, above all things, he hated to be in a minority, or made an object of ridicule. Turning aside the direct question of the Treasurer, he continued—

"Whatever they were, the horses are two as bonny blacks as any gentleman could wish to put into his carriage. By my troth, I have made a good adventure of it! I mean to propose, and I have no doubt I shall carry my motion, that they and the Major's coach be sold, and the proceeds spent in a treat to the incorporation. Make haste, man, and get better. You are as welcome to a share as if you had been one of those present; although, indeed, I cannot give you a share of the glory of putting Major Weir and his devils to the rout—and no small glory it is, on the word of a deacon, Treasurer."

The load that had for many days pressed down the Treasurer's spirits gradually passed off as the Deacon proceeded, and a new light shone on his mind; his countenance brightened up.

"Deacon," he said, "the truth begins to dawn upon me, and I feel a new man. Confess at once that the whole has been a contrivance of the smugglers to run their goods, availing themselves of the real Major's coach. It was a bold game, Deacon, and, like all unlawful games, a losing one in the end. Still it is strange what inducement they could have had for their cruel conduct to me on that miserable night, or how I was enabled to survive, or retained my reason. I have been often lost in fearful misery upon this subject since the fever left me; but you, my friend, have restored peace to my mind."

And they parted for the evening. The Treasurer's recovery was now most rapid. In a few days, all traces of his illness were nearly obliterated, and he went about his affairs as formerly. An altered man—all his wife's influence for evil was gone for ever; calmly and dispassionately he remonstrated with her; for a few days she struggled hard to retain her abused power; tears and threatened desertion of his house were used—but he heard her unmoved, still keeping his stern resolve with a quietness of manner which her cunning soon perceived it was not in her power to shake. She ceased to endeavour to shake it. His mother was restored to her proper station, and all was henceforth peace and harmony.

Several years had rolled on. The deaconship was, next election, bestowed upon Treasurer Kerr. He had served with credit, and his business prospered. The adventure with the Major's coach was only talked of as an event of times long passed, when, one forenoon, an elderly person, in a seaman's dress, much soiled, entered his workshop, and, addressing him by name, requested employment. Being very much in want of men at the time, he at once said he had no objection to employ him, if he was a good hand.

"I cannot say I am, now, what I once was in this same shop," he replied. "It is long since I forsook the craft; but, if you are willing to employ me, I will do my best."

The stranger was at once engaged, and gave satisfaction to his employer—betraying a knowledge of events that had happened to the family, and that were only traditionary to his master. His curiosity became awakened; to gratify which, he took the man home, one evening, after his day's work was over. For some time after they entered the house, the stranger became pensive and reserved—his eyes, every opportunity, wandering to the mother of his master, with a look of anxious suspense. At length, he arose from his seat, and said, in a voice tremulous with emotion—

"Mistress! my ever-revered mistress! have you entirely forgot Watty Brown, the runaway apprentice of your husband?"

"Watty Brown, the yellow-haired laddie," ejaculated she, "I can never forget. He was always a favourite of mine. You cannot be him; your hair is grey?"

"My good mistress, old and grey-headed as you see me," said he, "I am Watty Brown; but much has passed over my once yellow head to bleach it white as you see. My master here was but an infant in your arms, when I left Edinburgh. Often have I rocked him in his cradle. After all that has passed, I am here again, safe. I am sure there is no one present would bring me into trouble for what is now so long passed."

"How time flies!" said she. "The Porteous mob is in my mind as if it had happened last week. O Watty, you were always a reckless lad. Sore, sore you have rued, I do not doubt, that night. Do tell us what has come of you since?"

"Well, mistress, you recollect there was little love between the apprentices of Edinburgh and Captain Porteous. All this might have passed off in smart skirmishes on a King's birthday, or so; but his brutal behaviour at poor Robinson's execution, and slaughter of the townsmen, could not be forgiven by lord or tradesman. Well, as all the land knows, he was condemned, and all were satisfied; for the guilty was to suffer. But his pardon came; the bloodshedder of the innocent was to leave the jail as if he had done nothing wrong! Was this to be endured? Murmurs and threats were in every tradesman's mouth; the feuds of the apprentices were quelled, for a time; all colours joined in hatred of the murderer. Yet no plan of operations was adopted. In this combustible frame of mind, the drums of the city beat to arms. I rushed from this very house to know the cause, and saw the trades' lads crowding towards the jail. I inquired what was their intention.

'To execute righteous judgment!' a strange voice said, in the crowd.

I returned to the shop; and, taking the forehammer, as the best weapon I could find, in my haste, with good will joined, and was at the door amongst the foremost of those who attempted to break it open. Numbers had torches. Lustily did I apply my hammer to its studded front. Vainly

did I exert myself, until fire was put to it, when it at length gave way. As I ceased from my efforts, one of the crowd, carrying a torch, put a guinea into my hand, and said—

'Well done, my good lad. Take this; you have wrought for it. If you are like to come to trouble for this night's work, fly to Anstruther, and you will find a friend.'

While he spoke, those who had entered the jail were dragging Porteous down the stairs. My heart melted within me at the piteous sight. My anger left me, as his wailing voice implored mercy. I left the throng, who were hurrying him up towards the Lawnmarket, and hastened back to the workshop, where I deposited the hammer, and threw myself upon my bed; but I could not remain. The image of the wretched man, as he was dragged forth, appeared to be by my side. Partly to know the result, partly to ease my mind, I went again into the street. The crowds were stealing quietly to their homes. From some neighbour apprentices I learned the fatal catastrophe. I now became greatly alarmed for my safety, as numbers who knew me well had seen my efforts against the door of the jail. Bitterly did I now regret the active part I had taken. My immediate impulse was to fly from the city; but in what direction I knew not. Thus irresolute, I stood, at the Netherbow Port, when the same person that gave me the guinea at the jail-door approached to where I stood. Embracing the opportunity, I told him the fear I was in of being informed upon, when the magistrates began to investigate and endeavour to discover those who had been active in the affair.

'Well, my good fellow, follow me. It will not serve your purpose standing there.'

There were about a dozen along with him. We proceeded to the beach at Fisherrow—going round Arthur's Seat, by Duddingston—and were joined by many others. Two boats lay for them, on the beach, at a distance from the harbour. We went on board, and set sail for Fife, where we arrived before morning dawned. I found my new friend and acquaintance was captain and owner of a small vessel, who traded to the coast of Holland. He scrupled not to run a cargo upon his own account, without putting the revenue officers to any trouble, either measuring or weighing it. He had been the intimate friend of Robinson, and often sailed in the same vessel. I joined his crew; and, on the following day, we sailed for Antwerp. But why should I trouble you with the various turns my fortunes have taken for the last thirty-seven years? At times, I was stationary, and wrought at my trade; at others, I was at sea. My home has principally been in Rotterdam; but my heart has ever been in Auld Reekie. Many a time I joined the crew of a lugger, and clubbed my proportion of the adventure; my object being—more than the gain—to get a sight of it; for I feared to come to town—being ignorant as to how matters stood regarding my share in the Porteous riot. We heard, in Holland, only of the threats of the Government; but I was always rejoiced to hear that no one had been convicted. Several years had passed before it was safe for me to return; and, when it was, I could not endure the thought of returning to be a bound apprentice, to serve out the few months of my engagement that were to run when I left my master. Years passed on. I had accumulated several hundred guilders, with the view of coming to end my days in Edinburgh, when I got acquainted with a townsman deeply engaged in the smuggling line. I unfortunately embarked my all. He had some associates in the Cowgate, who disposed of, to great advantage, any goods he succeeded in bringing to them. His colleagues on shore had provided a coach and horses, with suitable dresses, to personate Major Weir's carriage, agreeable to the most approved description. The coach and horses were furnished by an innkeeper, whom they supplied with liquors at a low rate. My unfortunate adventure left the port, and I anxiously waited its return for several months; but neither ship nor friend made their appearance. At length he came to my lodgings in the utmost poverty—all had been lost. Of what use was complaint? He had lost ten times more than I had—everything had gone against him. His narrative was short. He reached the coast in safety, and landed his cargo in part, when he was forced to run for it, a revenue cutter coming in sight. After a long chase, he was forced to run his vessel on shore, near St Andrew's, and got ashore with only his clothes, and the little cash he had on board. He returned to where his goods were deposited—all that were saved. The coach was rigged out, and reached the Cowgate in the usual manner, when it was attacked and captured, in spite of a stout resistance, by a party of citzens. What of the goods remained in the neighbourhood of Musselburgh, were detained for the loss of the horses and coach. I was now sick of Holland, and resolved to return, poor as I left it, to the haunts of my happiest recollections. To be rich, and riches still accumulating in a foreign land, the idea of what we can at any time enjoy, a return—makes it bearable. But poverty and disappointment sadden the heart of the exile; and make the toil that would be counted light at home, a burden that sinks him early in a foreign grave.

"Did your partner make no mention of carrying off one of the townsmen in the coach?" said the Treasurer.

"Excuse me, master, for not mentioning it," replied Walter. "He did give me a full account of all that happened to you, and all you said; and regretted, when he heard of your illness, what, at the time, he was forced to do in self-preservation. When you fell out of the stair he meant to enter, he knew not who you were—a friend he knew you could not be, for only other two in the city had his secret. That you were a revenue officer, on the look-out for him, was his first idea. He was as much alarmed as you, until he found you were insensible. Not a moment was to be lost. The goods were hurried out, and you placed in the carriage, which was on its way from town before you shewed any symptoms of returning consciousness. His first intention was to carry you on board his lugger, and convey you to Holland, then sell you to the Dutch East India Company that you might never return to tell what you had been a witness of that night. The terror you were in, the sincerity of your confession, and belief that you were in the power of the Major, saved you from the miserable fate he had fixed for you. Pity struggled against the caution and avarice which urged him to take you away. Pity triumphed—you had been both play and school-fellows in former years. You were released—you know the rest.

The wife and mother scarce breathed, while Wattie related the danger the Treasurer had been in; he himself gave a shudder—all thanked God for his escape. Wattie Brown continued in his employ, as foreman over his work, and died about the year 1789. Widow Horner did not long survive that night of intense anguish—she died of a broken heart in her son's house. It was remarked by all, that, while Thomas Kerr prospered, Walter Horner, who was at one time much the richer man, gradually sank into the most abject circumstances, and died a pensioner on his incorporation, more despised than pitied. And thus ends our tale of Major Weir's famous night airings in Edinburgh.



WILSON'S

Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE STONE-BREAKER.

If any of our readers had had occasion to go out, for a couple of miles or so, on the road leading from Edinburgh to the village of Carlops, any time during the summer of the year 1836, they would have seen a little old man—very old—employed in breaking metal for the roads. The exact spot where *we* saw him, was at the turn of the eastern shoulder of the Pentland Hills; but the nature of his employment rendering him somewhat migratory, he may have been seen by others in a different locality. In the appearance of the old stone-breaker, there was nothing particularly interesting—nothing to attract the attention of the passer-by—unless it might be his great age. This, however, certainly was calculated to do so; and when it did, it must have been accompanied by a painful feeling at seeing one so old and feeble still toiling for the day that was passing over him; and toiling, too, at one of the most dreary, laborious, and miserable occupations which can well be conceived. Had the old man no children who could provide for the little wants of their aged parent without the necessity of his still labouring for them—who could secure him in that ease which exhausted nature demanded? It appeared not. Perhaps it was a spirit of independence that nerved his weak arm, and kept him toiling so far beyond the usual term of human capability. Probably the proud-spirited old man would break no bread but that which he had earned by the sweat of his brow and the labour of his hands. Perhaps it was so. At any rate, this we know that, at the early hour of five in the morning, as regularly as the morning came, the old stone-breaker had already commenced his monotonous labour. But this was not all. He had also, by this early hour, walked upwards of four miles—for so far distant was the scene of his occupation from the place of his residence, Edinburgh. He must, therefore, have left home between three and four o'clock, and this was his daily round, without intermission, without variation, and without relaxation. A bottle of butter milk and a penny loaf formed each day's sustenance. His daily earnings, labouring from five in the morning till six at night, averaged about ninepence! Hear ye this, ye who ride in emblazoned carriages! Hear ye this, ye loungers on the well-stuffed couch!—and hear it, ye revellers at the festive board, who have never toiled for the luxuries ye enjoy! Hear it, and think of it! But of this person we have other things to tell; and to these we proceed.

One morning, just after he had commenced the labours of the day, a young man, of about four or five-and-twenty years of age, accosted him, wished him a good morning, and seated himself on the heap of broken metal on which the old man was at work, and did so seemingly with the intention of entering into conversation with him. This was a proceeding to which the latter was much accustomed, it being a frequent practice with the humbler class of wayfarers. The advances of the stranger, therefore in the present instance, did not for a moment interrupt his labours, or slacken his assiduity. He hammered on without raising his head, even while returning the greetings that were made him.

"A delightful view from this spot," said the young man, breaking in upon a silence which had continued for some time after the first salutations had passed between them.

"Yes," said the old man, drily; and, continuing his operations, he again relapsed into his usual taciturnity; for, in truth, he was naturally of a morose and uncommunicative disposition. Undeterred by his cold repulsive manner, the stranger again broke silence, and said, with a deep-drawn sigh—

"How I envy these little birds that hop so joyously from spray to spray! Their life is a happy one. Would to God I were one of them!"

The oddness of the expressions, and the earnestness with which they were pronounced, had an effect on the labourer which few things had. They induced him to pause in his work, to raise his head, and to look in the face of the speaker, which he did with a smile of undefinable meaning. It was the first full look he had taken of him, and it discovered to him a countenance open and pleasing in its expression, but marked with deep melancholy, and telling, in language not to be misunderstood, a tale of heart-sickness of the most racking and depressing kind.

"Has your lot been ill cast, young man, that ye envy the bits o' burds o' the air the freedom and liberty that God has gien them?" said the old man, eyeing the stranger scrutinizingly, with a keen, penetrating grey eye, that had not even yet lost all its fire.

"It has," replied the latter. "I have been unfortunate in the world. I have struggled hard with my fate, but it has at length overwhelmed me."

The old man muttered something unintelligibly, and, without vouchsafing any other reply, resumed his labours. After another pause of some duration, which, however, he had evidently employed in *thinking* on the declaration of unhappiness which had just been made him—

"Some folly o' your ain, young man, very likely," said the other, carelessly, and still knapping the stones, whose bulk it was his employment to reduce.

"No," replied the young man, blushing; but it was a blush which he who caused it did not see. "I cannot blame myself."

"Nae man does," interposed the stone-breaker; "he aye blames his neighbours."

"Perhaps so," rejoined the stranger; "but you will allow that it is perfectly possible for a man to be unfortunate without any fault on his own part."

"I hae seldom seen't," replied the ungracious and unaccommodating old man; and he hammered on.

"Well, perhaps so," said the youth; "but I hope you will not deny that such things *may* be."

"Canna say," was the brief, but sufficiently discouraging rejoinder.

"Then let us drop the subject," said the stranger, smilingly. "Each will still judge of the world by his own experience. But, methinks, your own case, my friend, is a hard enough one. To see a man of your years labouring at this miserable employment, is a painful sight. Your debt to fortune is also light, I should believe."

"I hae aye trusted mair to my ain industry than to fortune young man. I never pat it in her power to jilt me. I

never trusted her, and, therefore, she has never deceived me; so her and me are quits." And the old man plied away with his long, light hammer.

"Yet your earnings must be scanty?"

"I dinna compleen o' them."

"I daresay not; but will you not take it amiss my offering this small addition to them?" And he tendered him a half-crown piece. "I have but little to spare, and that must be my apology for offering you so trifling a gift."

The man here again paused in his operations, and again looked full in the face of the stranger, but without making any motion towards accepting the proffered donation.

"I thocht ye said ye war in straits, young man," he said, and now resting his elbow on the end of his hammer.

"And I said truly," replied the former, again colouring.

"Then hoo come ye to be sportin yer siller sae freely? I wad hae thocht ye wad hae as muckle need o' a half-croon as I hae?"

"Perhaps I may," replied the stranger; "but that's not to hinder me from feeling for others, nor from relieving their distresses so far as I can."

Foolish doctrine, young man, an' no' for this warl. It's nae wunner that ye're in difficulties. I guessed the faut was yer ain, and noo I'm sure o't. Put up yer half-croon, sir. I dinna tak charity."

"I hope, however, I have not offended you by the offer? It was well meant."

"Ou, I daresay—I'm no the least offended; but tak an auld man's advice, an' dinna let yer feelins hae the command o' yer purse-strings, otherwise ye'll never hae muckle in't."

And the churlish old stone-breaker resumed his labours, and again relapsed into taciturnity. Silent as he was, however, it was evident that he was busily thinking, although none but himself could possibly tell what was the subject of his thoughts; but this soon discovered itself. After a short time, he again spoke—

"What may the nature an' cause o' yer defeeculties be, young man, an' I may speer?" he said—"and I fancy I may, since ye hae been sae far free on the subject o' yer ain accord."

"That's soon told," replied the stranger. "Three years ago, an aunt, with whom I was an especial favourite, left me two hundred and fifty pounds. With this sum I set up in business in Edinburgh in the ironmongery line, to which I was bred. My little trade prospered, and gradually attained such an extent that I found I could not do without an efficient assistant, who should look after the shop while I was out on the necessary calls of business. In this predicament I bethought me of my brother, who was a year older than myself, and accordingly sent for him to Selkirkshire, where he resided with our father, assisting him in his small farming operations; this being the business of the latter. My brother came; and, for some time, was everything I could have wished—sober, regular, and attentive; and we thus got on swimmingly. This, however, was a state of matters which was not long to continue. When my brother had about completed a year with me, I began to perceive a gradual falling off in his anxiety about the interests of our little business. I remonstrated with him on one or two occasions of palpable neglect; but this, instead of inducing him to greater vigilance, had the effect only of rendering him more and more careless. But I did not then know the worst. I did not then know that, in place of aiding, he was robbing me. This was the truth, however. He had formed an infamous connection with a woman of disreputable character, and the consequence was the adoption of a regular system of plunder on my little property, to answer the calls which she was constantly making on my unfortunate relative.

"About this time I took ill, and, not suspecting the integrity of my brother, although aware of his carelessness, I did not hesitate to trust him with the entire conduct of my affairs. Indeed, I could not help myself in this particular; he best knowing my business, and being, besides, the natural substitute for myself in such a case. For three months was I confined, unable to leave my own room; and, when I did come out, I found myself a ruined man. In this time, my brother had appropriated almost every farthing that had been drawn to his own purposes; and had, moreover, done the same by some of my largest and best outstanding accounts; and, to sum up all, he had fled, I knew not whither, on the day previous to that on which I made my first appearance in my shop after my recovery. That is about ten days since."

"Did the rascal harry ye oot an' oot?" here interposed the old stone-breaker, knapping away with great earnestness.

"No, there was a little on which he could not lay his hands—some considerable accounts which are payable only yearly; there was also some stock in the shop; but these, of course, are now the property of my creditors."

"But could ye no get a settlement wi' them, an' go on?" inquired the other, still knapping away assiduously. "I'm sure if you stated your case, your creditors wadna be owre hard on ye."

"Perhaps they might not; but there is one circumstance that puts it out of my power to make any attempt at arrangement. There is one bill of fifty pounds, due to a Sheffield house, on which diligence has been raised, and on which I am threatened with instant incarceration. In truth, it is this proceeding that has brought me here so early this morning. I expected to have been taken in my bed, as the charge was out yesterday, and am here to keep out of the way of the messengers. I am thus deprived of the power of helping myself, of taking any steps towards the adjustment of my affairs."

"An' could ye do any guid, think ye, if that debt war paid, or in some way arranged?" inquired the other.

"I think I could," said the party questioned. "My good outstanding debts are yet considerable, and so is the stock in the shop; so that, had a little time been allowed me, I could have got round. But all that is knocked on the head, by the impending diligence against me. That settles the matter at once, by depriving me of the necessary liberty to go about my affairs."

"It's a pity," said the man, drily. "Wha's the man o' business in Edinburgh that thae Sheffield folk hae employed to prosecute ye. What ca' ye him?"

"Mr Langridge."

"Ou ay, I hae heard o' him. An' will he no gie ye ony indulgence?"

"He cannot. His instructions are imperative, otherwise he would, I am convinced; for he is an excellent sort of man, and knows all about me and my affairs. Indeed, so willing was he to have assisted me, that, when the bill was first put into his hands, he wrote to his clients, strongly recommending lenient measures, and bearing testimony, on his own knowledge, to the hardship of my case; but their reply was brief and peremptory. It was to proceed against me instantly, and threatening him with the loss of their business if he did not. For this uncompromising severity they assigned as a reason, their having been lately 'taken in,' as they expressed it, to a large extent, by a number of their Scotch customers. So Mr Langridge had no alternative but to do his duty, and let matters take their course."

"True, replied the monosyllabic stone-breaker. It was all he said, or, if he had intended to say more, which,

however, is not probable, no opportunity was afforded him; for at this moment three labouring men of his acquaintance, who were on their way to their work, came up and began conversing. On this interruption taking place, the young man rose, wished him a good morning, which was merely replied to by a slight nod, and went his way.

At this point in our story, we change the scene to the writing chambers of Mr Langridge, and the time we advance to the evening of the day on which our tale opens.

It will surprise the reader to find our old stone-breaker, still wearing the patched and thread-bare clothes, the battered and torn hat, and the coarse, strong shoes, which had never rejoiced in the contact of blacking brush, in which he prosecuted his daily labours, ringing the door-bell of Mr Langridge's house, about eight o'clock in the evening. It will still more surprise him, perhaps, to find him received, notwithstanding the homeliness, we might have said wretchedness, of his appearance, by Mr Langridge himself, with great courtesy, and even with a slight air of deference.

On his entering the apartment in which that gentleman was, the latter immediately rose from his seat, and advanced, with extended hand, towards him.

"Ah, Mr Lumsden," he exclaimed, "how do you do? I hope I see you well. Come, my dear sir, take a chair." And he ran with eager civility for the convenience he named, and placed it for the accommodation of his visiter.

When the old man was seated—

"Well, my dear sir," said Mr Langridge, "I am sorry to say that *your rents* have not come so well in this last half year as usual. We are considerably short." And the man of business hurried to a large green painted tin box, that stood amongst some others on a shelf, and bore on its front the name of Lumsden, and from this drew forth what appeared to be a list or rent-roll, which he spread out on the table. "We are considerably short," he said. "There's six or eight of your folks who have paid nothing yet, and as many more who have made only partial payments."

"Ay," said the man, crustily, "what's the meanin o' that? Ye maun just screw them up, Mr Langridge; for I canna want my siller, and I winna want it. Hae thae folk, Thamsons, paid yet?"

"Not a shilling more than you know of," replied Mr Langridge.

"Weel then, Mr Langridge, ye maun just tak the necessary steps to recover; for I'm determined to hae my rent. I'm no gaun to alloo mysel to be ruined this way. They wadna leave me a sark to my back, if I wad let them. Ye maun just sequestrate, Mr Langridge—ye maun just sequestrate, an' we'll help oorsels to payment, since they winna help us."

"Oh, surely, surely, my dear sir. All fair and right. But I would just mention to you, that though, latterly, they have been dilatory payers—I would say, shamefully so—they are yet decent, honest, well-meaning people, these Thomsons; and that, moreover, there is some reason for their having been so remiss of late, although it is, certainly, none whatever, why you should want your rent."

"No, I fancy no," here interposed the other, with a triumphant chuckle.

"No, certainly not," went on Mr Langridge, who seemed to know well how to manage his eccentric client; "but only, I would just mention to you, that the *reason* of the dilatoriness of the Thomsons, is the husband's having been unable, from illness, to work for the last three months, and that, in that time, they have also lost no less than two children. It is rather a piteous case."

"An' what hae I to do wi' a' that?" exclaimed the other, impatiently. "What hae I to do wi' a' that, I wad like to ken? Am I to be ca'ed on to relieve a' the distress in the world? That wad be a bonny set o't. Am I to be robbed o' my richts that others may be at ease? That I winna, I warrant you. See that ye recover me thae folks' arrears, Mr Langridge, by hook or by crook, and that immediately, though ye shouldna leave them a stool to sit upon. That's *my* instructions to *you*."

"And they shall be obeyed, Mr Lumsden," replied the man of business—"obeyed to the letter. I merely mentioned the circumstance to you in order that you might be fully apprized of everything relating to your tenants, which it is proper you should know."

"Weel, weel, but there's nae use in troublin me wi thae stories. I dinna want to be plagued wi' folk makin puir mouths. There's aye a design on ane's pouch below't. By the by, Mr Langridge," continued he, after a momentary pause, "hae ye a young chield o' an airnmonger in your hauns enow about some bill or anither that he canna pay."

"The name?" inquired Mr Langridge, musingly.

"Troth that I canna tell you; for I never heard it, and forgot to speer."

"Let me see—oh, ay—you will mean, I dare say, a young man of the name of John Reid, poor fellow!"

"Very likely," said the client. "Is he a young man, an airnmonger to business, and hae ye diligence against him 'enow on a fifty pound bill, due to a Sheffield hoose?"

"The same," replied Mr Langridge. "These are exactly the circumstances. How came you, Mr Lumsden," he added, smilingly, "to be so well informed of them?"

"I'll maybe explain that afterwards; but, in the meantime, will ye tell me what sort o' a lad this Mr Reid is? Was he a decent weel-doin young man?"

"Remarkably so," replied Mr Langridge, "remarkably so, Mr Lumsden. I can answer for that; for I have known him now for a good while, and have had many opportunities of estimating his character."

"Then hoo cam he into his present difficulties?"

"Through the misconduct of a brother—entirely through the misconduct of a brother." And Mr Langridge proceeded to give precisely the same account of the young man's misfortunes, and of the present state of his affairs, that he himself had given to the old stone-breaker, as already detailed to the reader. When he had concluded—

"It seems to me rather a hard sort o' case," said the client. "But could ye no help him a wee on the score o' lenity?"

"I would willingly do it if I could; but it's not in my power. My instructions are peremptory. I dare not do it but with a certainty of losing the business of the pursuers, the best clients I have."

"Naething, then, 'll do but payin the siller, I suppose?" said the other.

"Nothing, nothing, I fear. My clients seem quite determined. They are enraged at some smart losses which they have lately sustained in Scotland, and will give no quarter."

"Then I suppose if they *war* paid, they would be satisfied," said the stone-breaker.

"Ha, ha, ha! Mr Lumsden, no doubt of *that*," exclaimed Mr Langridge, laughing. "That would settle the business at once."

"I fancy sae," said the other, musingly. Then, after a pause—"An' think ye the lad wad get on if this stane war taen frae aboot his neck?"

"I have no doubt of it—not the least," replied Mr Langridge, "for I have every confidence in the young man's industry and uprightness of principle. But he has no friend to back him, poor fellow; no one to help him out of the scrape."

"Ye canna be quite sure o' that, Mr Langridge," said the old man. "What if I hae taen a fancy to help him mysel?"

"You, Mr Lumsden!—you!" exclaimed Mr Langridge

in great surprise. "What motive on earth can you have for assisting him?"

"I didna say that I meant to assist him—I only asked ye, what if I took a fancy to do't?"

"Why, to that I can only say that, if you have, he is all right, and will get his head above water yet. But you surprise me, Mr Lumsden, by this interest in Reid. May I ask how it comes about?"

"I'll tell you a' that presently, but I'll first tell you that I *do* mean to assist the young man in his straits. I'll advance the money to pay that bill for him. Will ye see to that, then, Mr Langridge? Put me doon for the amount oot o' the funds in your hauns, and stay further proceedins."

Mr Langridge could not express the surprise he felt on this extraordinary intimation from a man who, although there were some good points in his character, notwithstanding of the outward crust of churlishness in which it was encased, he never believed capable of any very striking act of generosity. Mr Langridge, we say, could not express the surprise with which this unlooked for instance of that quality in Mr Lumsden inspired, nor did he attempt it; for he justly considered that such expression would be offensive to the old man, as implying a belief that he had been deemed incapable of doing a benevolent thing. Mr Langridge, therefore, kept his feelings, on the occasion, to himself, and contented himself with promising compliance, and venturing a muttered compliment or two, which, however, were ungraciously enough received, on the old man's generosity.

"But whar's the young man to be fand?" inquired the latter.

"Why, that I cannot well tell you," replied Mr Langridge; "for I was informed, in the course of the day, by the messengers whom I employed to apprehend him, that he had left his lodging early in the morning, no doubt in order to avoid them, and they could not ascertain where he had gone to."

"Humph, that's awkward," replied the client. "I wad like to find him."

"I fear that will be difficult," replied Mr Langridge; "but I will call off the blood-hounds in the meantime, and terminate proceedings."

"Ay, do sae, do sae. But can we no get haud o' the lad ony way?"

At this moment, a rap at the door of the apartment in which was Mr Langridge and his client, interrupted further conversation on the subject.

"Come in," exclaimed the former.

The door opened, and in walked two messengers, with Reid a prisoner between them. We leave it to the reader to conceive the latter's surprise, on beholding his acquaintance of the morning, the old stone-breaker, seated in an arm-chair in Mr Langridge's writing chamber. But while he looked this surprise, he also seemed to feel acutely the humiliation of his position. After a nod of recognition, he said, with an attempt at a smile, and addressing himself to the old man—

"You see they have got me after all, my friend. But it was my own doing. On reflection, I saw no use in endeavouring to avoid them, and gave myself up, at least threw myself in their way, in order to encounter the worst at once, and be done with it."

"I dare say ye was richt, after a'," replied the stone-breaker; "it was the best way. Mr Langridge," he added, and now rising from his seat, "wad ye speak wi' me for a minnit, in another room?"

"Certainly, Mr Lumsden," replied Mr Langridge.

"Will we proceed with the prisoner?" inquired one of the messengers.

"No, remain where you are a moment, till I return;" and Mr Langridge led the way out of the apartment, followed by the old stone-breaker. When they had reached another room, and the door had been secured—

"Noo, Mr Langridge, anent what I was speaking to ye about regarding this young man wha has come in sae curiously upon us, juist whan we were wanting him—I dinna care to be seen in the matter, sae ye maun juist manage't for me yoursel."

"Had ye not better enjoy the satisfaction of your own good deed in person, Mr Lumsden, by telling Mr Reid of the important service you intend doing him."

"I'll do naething o' the kind," replied the old stone-breaker, testily. "I dinna want to be bothered wi't. Sae juist pay ye his bill and charges, Mr Langridge, an' keep an ee on his proceedins afterwards, an' let me ken frae time to time hoo he's gettin on."

With these instructions Mr Langridge promised compliance; and, on his having done so, the stone-breaker proposed to depart; but, just as he was about doing so, he turned suddenly round to his man of business, and said—

"About the Tamsons, Mr Langridge, ye needna, for a wee while, tak thae staps again them that I was speakin aboot. Let them alane a wee till they get roun a bit."

"I'll do so, Mr Lumsden," replied the worthy writer, who, the reader will observe, had accomplished his generous purpose dexterously. He knew his man, and acted accordingly.

"What's their arrears, again?" inquired the other.

"Half-a-year's rent—£3: 17s.," replied Mr Langridge.

"Ay, it's a heap o' siller. No to be fan at every dyke side. An' then, there's this half-year rinning on, an' very near due. That'll mak—hoo much?"

"Just £7: 14s. exactly, Mr Lumsden."

"Ay, exactly," replied the latter, who had been making a mental calculation of the amount, and had arrived, although more slowly than his experienced lawyer, at the same result. "A serious soom," added the client.

"No trifle, indeed, Mr Lumsden," said Mr Langridge, "but it's safe enough. They're honest people."

"Ye're aye harpin on that string," replied the stone-breaker, surlily; "but what signifies their honesty to me, if they'll no pay me my rent?"

"True, very true," said the law agent. "That's the only practical honesty."

"See you an' get thae arrears, at ony rate, oot o' them, *if* ye can, Mr Langridge; an', if ye canna, I suppose we maun juist want them. Ye needna push owre hard for them either, since they're in the state ye say. But ye'll surely mak the present half-year oot o' them. That maun be paid. Mind *that*, at ony rate, maun be paid, Mr Langridge." And saying this, he placed his old tattered hat, which he had hitherto held in his hand, on his head, and left the house.

On his departure, Mr Langridge hastily entered the apartment in which he had left the messengers with their prisoner.

"We're just waiting marching orders, Mr Langridge, said the latter, on his entering, and making an attempt at playfulness, with which his spirit but ill accorded. "My friends here are getting tired of their charge, and anxious to be relieved of him."

"Are they so, Mr Reid?" replied Mr Langridge, smiling. "Why, then, we had best relieve them at once." Then turning to the principal officer—"Quit your prisoner, Maxwell—the debt is settled. Mr Reid, you are at liberty."

The blood rushed to poor Reid's face, and then withdrew, leaving it as pale as death, and yet he could express no part of the feelings which caused these violent alternations. At length—

"Mr Langridge," he said, "what is the meaning of this? How do I come to be liberated?"

"By the simplest and most effectual of all processes, Mr Reid," replied the worthy writer, smiling; "by the payment of the debt."

"But *I* have not paid the debt, Mr Langridge. I *could* not pay the debt."

"No; but somebody else might. The short and the long of it is, Mr Reid, that *a friend* has come forward and settled the claim on which diligence was raised against you. The bill, with interest and all expenses, *is* paid, and you are again a free man."

Again overwhelmed by his feelings, which were a thousand times more eloquently expressed by a flood of silent tears than they could have been by the most carefully rounded periods, it was some time before the young man could pursue the conversation, or ask for the further information which he yet intensely longed to possess. On recovering from the burst of emotion which had, for the moment, deprived him of the power of utterance—

"And *who*, pray, Mr Langridge, is this friend—this friend indeed?"

"Why, I do not know exactly whether I am at liberty to tell you, Mr Reid," replied Mr Langridge. "The friend you allude to declined transacting this matter personally with you, which seems to imply that he did not care that you should know who he was; yet, as he certainly did not expressly forbid me to disclose him, and as I think it but right that you should know to whom you are indebted, I will venture to tell you. Had you some conversation, at an early hour this morning, with an old stone-breaker, on the highway side, about three or four miles from town?"

"I had. The old man that was sitting here when I came in."

"The same. Well, what would you think if *he* should have been the friend in question? Would you expect, from his manner, that he *would* do such a thing? or, from his appearance and occupation, that he could?"

"Certainly not—certainly not. The old man—the poor old man, to whom I offered half-a-crown—who works for ninepence a-day—who never saw me in his life before this morning—who knows nothing of me! Impossible, Mr Langridge—impossible; he cannot be the man. You do not say that he is?"

"But I do though, Mr Reid, and that most distinctly. It is he, and no other, I assure you, who has done you this friendly service."

"Then, if it be so, I know not what to say to it, Mr Langridge. I can say nothing. I trust, however, I shall not be found wanting on the score of gratitude. I can say no more. But will you be so good as inform me, if you can, how the good man has come to do me so friendly a service? Who on earth, or what is he?

"Sit down, sit down, Mr Reid, and I'll answer all your questions—I'll tell you all about him," replied Mr Langridge.

Mr Reid having complied with this invitation, the latter began:—

"The history of the old stone-breaker, my good sir, is a very short and a very simple one. It contains no vicissitude, and to few, besides ourselves, would be found possessing any particular interest. Your friend was, in his youth, a soldier, and served, I believe, in the American war. At his return home on the conclusion of that war, he was discharged, still a young man, and shortly after married a woman with a fortune" (smilingly) "of some five-and-twenty or thirty pounds. With this sum the thrifty pair purchased two or three cows, and commenced the business of cow-feeders. They prospered; for they were both saving and industrious, and, in time, realized a considerable sum of money, which they went on increasing. This they invested in house property from time to time, till their possessions of this kind became very valuable

For upwards of forty years they continued in this way, when Mrs Lumsden died, leaving her husband a lonely widower; for they had no children. On the death of the former, the latter, who was now an old man, and unequal to conducting, alone, the business in which his wife's activity and industry had hitherto aided him, sold off his cows, and proposed to live in retirement on the rents of his property; and this he did for some time. Accustomed, however, to a life of constant labour and exertion, the old man soon found the idleness on which he had thrown himself, intolerably irksome. He became miserable from a mere want of having something to do. While in this state of ennui, chancing one day to stroll into the country, (this is what he told me himself,) he saw some labouring men knapping stones by the way-side; and, strange as the fancy may seem, he was instantly struck with a desire of taking to this occupation. He did so, and has, from that day to the present, now upwards of ten years, pursued it with as much assiduity as if it was his only resource for a subsistence. He has, as I already told you, no family of his own; neither has he, I believe, any relation living; or, if there be, they must be very remote; and, as he strictly confines his expenditure to his daily earnings as a stone-breaker—some ninepence a-day, I believe—his wealth is rapidly increasing, and is, at this moment, no trifle, I assure you. Now, my good sir, when I tell you that I am the law agent of this strange, eccentric person, and that I manage all his business for him, I have told you everything about him that is worth mentioning."

"There is just one thing, Mr Langridge," said Mr Reid, who had been an attentive listener to the tale just told him, "that wants explanation: can you give me the smallest shadow of a reason for the part he has acted towards me?"

"Nay, there you puzzle me; I cannot. It appears as unaccountable to me as to you, although I have known Mr Lumsden now for upwards of fifteen years."

"Did you ever know him do a thing of this kind before?"

"Never; and I must say candidly, that, although he is by no means deficient in kindness of heart, notwithstanding his rough exterior, I did not believe him capable of such an act of generosity."

"It is an extraordinary matter," said Mr Reid; "and although I can have but little right to inquire into the *motives* for an act by which I am so largely benefited—it seems ungracious to do so—yet would I give a good round sum, if I had it to spare, to know the real cause of this good man's friendship towards me."

"Why, that I suspect neither you nor I shall ever know. I question much, indeed, if the principal actor in this affair himself could give a reason for what he has done. It seems to me just one of those odd and unaccountable things which eccentric men, like Mr Lumsden, will sometimes do; and with this solution of the mystery, and the benefit it has produced to you, I rather think, Mr Reid, you must be content. I would, however, add, in order to redeem Mr Lumsden's act of generosity from the character of a mere whim, that your case was one eminently calculated to excite any latent feeling of benevolence which he might possess; and that your manner and appearance—no flattery—are equally well calculated to second a claim so established. Yourself, and your peculiar circumstances, in short, had chanced to touch the right chord in a right man's breast, and hence the response on which we are speculating."

Having thus discussed the knotty point of the old stone-breaker's sudden act of generosity, Mr Langridge invited Mr Reid to put his affairs into his hands, promising that they should have the advantage, on his part, of something more than mere professional zeal. This friendly invitation

the latter gladly accepted, and shortly after consigned all his business matters to the care of the worthy writer, who exerted himself in behalf of his client with an efficiency that soon placed the latter once more in the way of well-doing. And well he did; having subsequently realized a very handsome independency. In the success of the young man, no one rejoiced more than the old stone-breaker, who frequently visited him in his shop; sometimes merely for the purpose of seeing him; at others, to purchase some of those little articles of ironmongery which the due preservation of his dwelling-house property demanded. Let us state, too, that, amongst his purchases, were, at different times, the hammer-heads which he used in his occupation of stone-breaking.

In their first transaction in this way, there was something curiously characteristic of the old man's peculiarities of temper. Mr Reid, not yet perfectly aware of these peculiarities, declined, for some time, putting any price on a couple of hammer-heads which his friend had picked out. He would have made him a present of them; and to the latter's inquiry as to their price, replied, evasively, and laughing while he spoke, that he would tell him that afterwards.

"I tak nae credit, young man," said the stone-breaker crustily, "tell me enow their cost." And he pulled out a small greasy leathern purse, and was undoing its strings, when Mr Reid laid his hand on his arm to prevent him, at the same time telling him that he would do him a favour by accepting the hammer-heads in a present. "What is such a trifle between you and me, Mr Lumsden—you to whom I owe everything?"

"You owe me a great deal mair than ye're ever likely to pay me, at ony rate, young man, if this be the way ye transact business," replied the other, with evident signs of displeasure. "Tell me the price o' thae hammer-heads at ance, an' be dune wi't. I hae nae broo o' folk that fling awa their guids as ye seem inclined to do."

Mr Reid blushed at the reproof, but, seeing at once how the land lay, with regard to his customer's temper, he now plumply named the price of the hammers, sevenpence each.

"Sevenpence!" exclaimed the old man. "I'll gie ye nae such price. Doonricht robbery! I can get them as guid in ony shop in the toon for saxpence ha'penny. If ye like to tak that price for them, ye may hae't. If no, ye can keep them."

Mr Reid, now knowing his man somewhat better than he did at first, demurred, but at length agreed to the abatement, and the transaction was thus brought to a close."

We need hardly add, that the £50 advanced by the old man to Mr Reid, were subsequently repaid; but the call is more imperative on us to state, that, on the former's death, which took place about two years after, the latter found himself named in his will for a very considerable sum. One, somewhat larger, was bequeathed by the same document to Mr Langridge. The remainder was appropriated to various charities. And here, good reader, ends the story of the Stone-Breaker.

THE TREE WEE HEELANMEN.

Do any of our readers know the little village of Knocknicruachan in Cantyre, in the West Highlands? It is a prettily-situated place—a beautiful bay in front, and a range of lofty and romantic hills behind.

We have asked if any of our readers know the village; but it signifies little whether they do or not. We can tell our story nevertheless; its interest not at all depending on any such knowledge—only, that, if they happened to know something of the place in question, they might the more likely be able to corroborate the truth of our tale.

Taking our chance of this particular, we proceed to say, that, about thirty years ago, there flourished in the village of Knocknicruachan three enterprising young men, of the true Celtic patronyms of Donald M'Eachern, Duncan M'Lachlane, and Roderick M'Murrichan.

We have said that they flourished in the village of Knocknicruachan. So they did; but it was only up to a certain period. On attaining the years of manhood—being all about the same age—they became imbued with a strong desire to transplant themselves; in other words, to remove to a more genial climate. They, in short, resolved to push their fortunes in another part of the world; to leave their native village, and to proceed to some of our large manufacturing towns in quest of employment. They fixed on Manchester, having some friends already established there. Having come to this resolution, they consulted together as to various little matters connected with their intended expedition, and had arranged all that was necessary, when it occurred to one of them that they would be greatly at a loss for a little English to help them on their journey—not one of them speaking a word of that language. The other two were at once struck with the force of the remark. It had not occurred to them before; but they now saw plainly enough it was a desideratum. What was to be done? It was difficult to say. They found it so. A bright idea, however, at length presented itself to the original suggester of the dilemma: this was to apply to Ian More, a neighbour, who had lived some time in the low country, and who had acquired what was, in their opinion, a competent knowledge of the language of the Sassenach; although, in truth, Ian's vocabulary of the tongue alluded to did not contain much above a dozen words, and the most of these bore but a very faint resemblance to the original, Ian having taken the liberty of making certain alterations on them to render them more pliable and accommodating to his own peculiar habits of pronunciation.

To Ian, then, the three adventurous Celts determined on applying for the desiderated quantity of English; just as much as would enable them to answer a simple question or two; such as were most likely to be put to them.

On Ian they accordingly waited, and told him of the assistance they required from him. Ian at once undertook to supply them with the necessary commodity. Having, however, as already hinted, himself but little to spare, it could not be expected that he should give much. What he had, however, he readily communicated.

"You will likely be asked," he said, speaking in his native language, "who you are; and to this you will answer," (this spoken in English,) "'We tree wee Heelanmen.' You will then be asked what is your object in coming to the low country. You will reply," (English again,) "'Ta purse an' ta penny siller.'"

Ian's skill as a teacher of English could go no farther. But this was thought by all parties enough, especially as it was believed they could not have carried more, although it had been offered them. Having conned over their lessons till they were pronounced perfect by their instructor, the three adventurers conceived themselves now ready to proceed on their enterprise.

Here we pause for a moment in our narrative to advert to a circumstance which we consider as standing in need of explanation. This is Ian's having introduced the descriptive "wee" into the response which he had put into the mouths of his pupils. It may be thought to have been superfluous, and so it was, we dare say; nor can we tell why Ian thought it necessary; but it was certainly correct, for the three adventurers were remarkably little men—three little, hairy, simple-looking bodies. The obviousness, then, of the fact, had probably forced itself so

strongly on Ian s perceptions, that he had unconsciously, as it were, introduced the allusion to it in his formula. We take it for granted this was the case, and proceed.

Being now prepared at all points, English and all, our "tree wee Heelanmen" started on their journey, and got on, without interruption of any kind, for several days, during which time they had made out about half the distance of their destination. Nothing in all this time had occurred to disturb their quiet onward progress, nor to call for any exercise of their newly acquired language. Not a single question had been put to them by any one, so that their responses were still fresh and untouched. It was not to be long so, however. A shocking circumstance at once interrupted their hitherto peaceful progress, and led to an immediate use of their stock of English.

While pursuing their journey one afternoon, and being now a day's travel into England, the three Highlanders were horror-struck at discovering on the road-side the dead body of a man, who bore all the appearance of having been recently murdered. A dreadful contusion appeared upon the forehead, as if inflicted by some heavy iron instrument; while other marks of violence on different parts of the body, left no doubt that the deceased had met with a sudden and untimely death. Of this the three poor Highlanders were convinced, and were in the act of hanging over the body in pitying wonder, and bemoaning the miserable fate of the dead man, when a carriage, behind which rode several attendants, drove up. The occupants were attracted by the sight of the dead body, and the three men around it. The carriage was instantly stopped, when two gentlemen stepped out, came up to the spot, and on seeing the corpse of the murdered man, asked who had committed the atrocious deed. The query was addressed to M'Eachern in particular, and by him it was answered. Looking at the querist with a countenance of great stolidity, he replied—

"Oh hon, oh hon! we tree wee Heelanmen."

"What! was it you that committed the horrid deed, and do you confess it! Gracious heaven! what could tempt you to commit so foul a crime?"

"Ta purse an' ta penny siller."

"Ay, that has been the temptation to many a dark deed," replied one of the gentlemen; and, in the next instant, he, with his own hands, collared one of the atrocious criminals, calling, at the same time, on his companion and servants to do the same to the other two. They instantly complied; and, in the next instant, the whole "tree wee Heelanmen" were secured; and in a few minutes after, were on their march, prisoners, to the nearest county town, into which they were brought in a sort of procession; the poor men the while greatly marvelling, as they well might, what could be the meaning of the treatment they were undergoing.

Having reached the town, they were immediately conducted before a magistrate, when one of the gentlemen who had aided in their capture, detailed to the former the whole particulars of the shocking occurrence connected with the prisoners, which they had just witnessed, adding, that the culprits had confessed their guilt, but had obstinately refused to give any further account of themselves, although repeatedly and earnestly urged to do so.

"They will answer no questions," said the gentleman; "but readily admit that they are the murderers, and acknowledge their motives for committing the dreadful crime. They confess it was plunder."

On this statement being made, the magistrate put on his most awful looks, and, addressing the prisoners, who were staring about them in the utmost perplexity and amazement at the novelty of their position, said—

"Unhappy men, this is a dreadful charge against you; and I much fear from what this gentleman has said—and to whom, by the way, the public and the cause of justice are much indebted for the activity and decision of his exertions—I say, that I much fear, from what he has said, that there can be little or no doubt of your guilt. However, you will have the benefit of a fair and impartial trial; and, if you choose it, may still recall the confession you are represented to have made. Do you still adhere to that confession?" added the magistrate, pausing and looking hard at the prisoners. "Speak—was it you that committed the atrocious murder?"

"We tree wee Heelanmen," replied M'Eachern, who was again spokesman; and he essayed a smile and a bow as he spoke; his companions, at the same time, confirming his assertion by a series of nods; and all three looking at their interrogator with an air of complacency that was strangely at variance with the predicament in which they stood.

"And what, wretched men, what could tempt you to the commission of so horrible a crime?" continued the magistrate.

"Ta purse an' ta penny siller," promptly replied M'Eachern; and again he smiled and bowed, and again his companions nodded their assent to his acknowledgment.

"Then," said the magistrate, "nothing now remains for me to do but to commit you to stand your trial." And he was about to execute the necessary instruments for such proceeding, when he was interrupted by a loud noise, as if a crowd of persons, seeking admission, were at the door. This, in truth, was the case. In the next instant, five or six countrymen, lugging a ruffianly-looking fellow along with them, entered the apartment in which the proceedings just spoken of were going on.

"What is the meaning of this? What do you want, you men?" inquired the magistrate, angrily.

One of the men replied for the others, saying that the person they had in charge had just committed a barbarous murder.

"What! another murder!" exclaimed the magistrate, aghast with horror. "Here are three men," pointing to Messrs Duncan, Donald, and Roderick, "who have just confessed to a similar crime! Gracious heaven, this is dreadful!"

An investigation into this new assassination was immediately entered on; and, to the surprise of all present, ended in merging the two murders into one. There had been only one murder committed, and the person last brought in was at once proven to be the guilty man. This point was thus established. The countrymen who made him prisoner had *seen* him commit the deed. He had fled, and they had pursued; and it was while they were in pursuit of the real criminal, that the three Highlanders had come up to the body, and that their apprehension, as already described, had taken place. On all this being made sufficiently evident, the magistrate, in great surprise, turned to the Highlanders, and asked them what they meant by acknowledging a crime which they had not committed.

"We tree wee Heelanmen," was the immediate reply.

"Well, I dare say you are—I don't doubt it," said the magistrate; "but I ask you again, what was your motive for confessing a guilt of which you are innocent?

"Ta purse an' ta penny siller," rejoined the Celtic spokesman.

"Oh, money was your object, was it? But how, pray, did you expect such a proceeding to benefit you in that way?"

"We tree wee Heelanmen," said M'Eachern, with the same stolid expression of countenance he had exhibited all along.

A momentary silence ensued amongst the persons present at this extraordinary repetition of the phrase, and all looked at each other with a smile of perplexity and amazement. At length an almost simultaneous burst of laughter announced that a discovery of something like the real facts

of the case had been made, nearly at the same time, by every individual in the room. It became evident to all, that the oft-repeated responses comprehended all the English of which the "tree wee Heelanmen" were possessed; and, under this conviction, corroborated, as it was, by other circumstances, they were at once discharged; but not before they had been presented with a couple of guineas by the gentleman who had been so active in apprehending them, as some compensation for the treatment to which he had been the means of subjecting them.

On being liberated, our three little heroes prosecuted their journey, and hoped that they might be allowed to accomplish it without any more interruptions. In the meantime, they beguiled the way by talking over their last adventure, and wondering how they had come to be treated as they had been. On this subject, however, they at length came to a satisfactory conclusion, attributing their apprehension to the circumstance of their having been found near the dead body; but never dreaming that the unfortunate responses with which they had been furnished by Ian More, had been the main cause of that proceeding. In ignorance of this, their English, of course, was retained for further service with as much confidence in its efficacy as ever. Having accomplished another day's weary travel, which brought them within a short distance of their destination, the travellers would fain have completed the journey at once; but one of them, who was more weakly than the other two, declared that he was so done up that he could not possibly proceed. This was an awkward circumstance, as it was now a late hour of the night, pitch dark, and there was no public-house at hand in which they might find quarters till the morning. In this dilemma, our travellers espied a farm-house at some distance from the road; and, thinking of the hospitality of their own country, they determined on repairing to it, and asking the boon of a night's lodging. On reaching the house, however, they found that all the inmates had retired to rest. Everything was quiet about the place; doors locked, and windows fast. Too modest and timid in their natures to think of disturbing the repose of the family by knocking, or by any other noisy means making their presence and wants known, they looked around them to see if they could discover any cover or shelter of any kind, in which they might ensconce themselves for the night. In this quest, fortune singularly favoured them. A barn door stood invitingly open. They entered; and, better luck still, found it well stored with straw. Nothing could be more convenient.

Congratulating themselves on their good fortune, they instantly burrowed themselves in the straw, and, in a few minutes, were all three enjoying a most refreshing snooze; which snooze continued without the smallest interruption for several hours, and would, in all probability, have continued for several hours longer, but for the occurrence of a very extraordinary circumstance. About the middle of the night, our three travellers were suddenly awoke in great terror by a dreadful noise outside of their dormitory. The noises were those of a number of men and women in a state of great commotion and alarm. Amazed and confounded at the extraordinary hubbub, the startled occupants of the barn rushed to the door, and, to their farther amazement and perplexity, saw three or four of the corn stacks in the barnyard in a blaze. On perceiving the catastrophe, they were about to run to the assistance of those who were employed in attempts to arrest the progress of the fire, or rather fires—for there were, as already said, three or four stacks in a state of conflagration—when each of them found himself suddenly collared from behind by a corresponding number of brawny arms. They had been seen emerging from the barn; and no doubt having been entertained that they were the incendiaries, their capture, in the way described, was the consequence.

"Was it you," roared the owner, grasping M'Eachern, or who was it, you villain, that set my stacks on fire? Who, who was it?—answer me!" exclaimed the farmer, furiously, and again he shook little Donald violently.

"We tree wee Heelanmen," replied the latter, in a choking voice.

"Oh! you have all been concerned in it, have you, and you confess it too? So, so. Then, curse me if I don't give you sauce to this dish. Mind ye, my lads, this is a hanging business, and, depend upon it, you shall have the full benefit of the act that makes provision thereanent. What the devil, you scoundrels you, induced you to fire my barnyard?"

This was another pointed question, and it was as pointedly answered—

"Ta purse an' ta penny siller," replied Donald.

"Ha! bribed, you rascals. It's very well. I half thought so, and I more than half know who bribed you. I'll bring *them* up, too, with a short turn, presently."

The unresisting incendiaries were now conducted into the farmer's house, until a consultation should be held as to the best way of disposing of them. Here, however, another instance occurred, to be added to the many already on record, of the amiability of female nature. The farmer's wife, struck with pity for the three unfortunate young men, ventured to suggest that, notwithstanding the suspicious circumstances in which they were found, they might not, after all, be the incendiaries.

"Why, voman," said the farmer, furiously, "they confesses it themselves, and they confesses too that they war bribed to do it; and doesn't we know wery vell who it war that bribed them? Ha'na we been afeared o' this for a long while back? Yes, they confesses it. Ax them yourself."

The farmer's wife did so.

"Was it indeed you," she said, "who set our barnyard on fire?"

"We tree wee Heelanmen," replied Donald, with his usual promptitude.

"You hear that, wife?" interrupted the farmer, triumphantly. "Will that satisfy you?"

The kind-hearted woman looked sorrowful and disappointed, but made no reply. At length—

"What," she said, again addressing Donald—"what could induce you to injure us in this way?"

"Ta purse an' ta penny siller," said Donald.

Finding that she was now without any further pretence for interfering in their behalf, the good woman turned away, and left the unhappy men to their fate. The prisoners were further secured, by having their hands tied behind their backs; in which predicament they were, shortly after, conducted by a numerous escort to Manchester, and finally lodged in the jail of that city. The unfortunate "tree wee Heelanmen" were now, however, in the vicinity of friends, and they lost no time in availing themselves of this advantage. An investigation into the matter was the immediate consequence, and its result was the instant liberation of the "tree wee Heelanmen," who soon after got into employment, and, we believe, in time, added considerably to their stock of English, of which the reader will readily allow, we daresay, they stood in some need.



WILSON'S

Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE SCHOOLFELLOWS.

A FEW years ago, I happened to pass through the main street of Carlisle, just as the south mail had "pulled up" at the door of "The Bush." The night was very cold; the horses were tossing their heads, and pawing the ground, impatient to escape from the restraint of their harness; and the steam which rose in clouds from their bodies, gave evidence that they had just "come off" a rapid and fatiguing stage. At the coach door stood a middle-aged, gentlemanly-looking man, whose blue nose, muffled throat, and frozen body, pointed him out as one of the new arrivals. As I loitered slowly past, the stranger, who had just settled the claims of the guard, turned round and observed me. His keen eye rested for a moment on my features —he started, looked again, and then said—"No; I cannot be mistaken. I surely ought to know that face. Is not your name Lorrimer?"

"It is," replied I, surprised at being thus accosted by a perfect stranger. "You seem to be better acquainted with my name, sir, than I am with yours; for I am not conscious of ever having seen you before."

"Look at me again, Frank; try if you cannot recollect me," said he, as we entered the travellers' room, and the gas light shone full on his face. I looked; but in vain. "I am ashamed to say I do not know who you can be, though I have a kind of consciousness that your features are those of an old friend."

"Do you remember Richard Musgrave?"

"What! Dick Muzzy?—to be sure I do; the kindest-hearted fellow that ever dog's-eared a Latin grammar. What news of my old schoolmate?"

"He is speaking to you now."

"Is it possible! You Richard Musgrave! Why, Richard was younger, I rather think, than myself; and you, begging your pardon, look almost old enough to be my father."

"So it is, notwithstanding. I am Richard Musgrave. Time and climate must have altered me even more sadly than I conceived, since Frank Lorrimer fails to recognise me."

He was indeed changed. Some alteration might have been expected, for several years had elapsed since we had met; but time alone could not have thus metamorphosed him. We had been schoolfellows and intimate friends; and, when he left home, ten years before, he was a handsome, vigorous, young fellow, with hair dark as a raven's wing, and a brow clear as alabaster. Now, his hair was iron-grey, his features were dark and sun-burnt, and the scar, of a sabre wound apparently, disfigured his forehead. Even with my knowledge of his identity, some minutes elapsed ere I could persuade myself that the friend of my early years stood before me; but my recollection slowly revived as I gazed upon him, and I wondered at my own stupidity in not having sooner recognised him.

"Musgrave, my dear fellow," said I, shaking him cordially by the hand, "I rejoice to see you. Time has altered us both outwardly; but, I trust, it has left our hearts unchanged. The recollection of youthful joys and sorrows is the last to leave us. Amid all the changes and chances of life, our thoughts fondly dwell upon the days of our innocent and happy childhood; and all the friendships we form in after years can never efface the remembrance of those who were dear to us in early youth. I have often thought of you, Musgrave, and often, though in vain, I have made anxious inquiries after the fate of my old friend and schoolfellow; and, now that you *have* returned, I should have passed you by as a common stranger, had your memory been as treacherous as my own."

"You forget, my dear fellow," replied he, "that *you* are but little changed; your florid cheek, and smooth, unwrinkled brow, prove that time has been flowing on in a smooth, unruffled current with *you*; that you have been leading a life of ease and comfort; but, look at me. On my sun-burnt features you may read a tale of hardship and exposure. Look at my brow!—these premature wrinkles are mementos of care and anxiety. But, come, I have much to ask and to tell you; if you have leisure, let us retire to a private room, and talk over the past. I cannot, I find, proceed on my journey till the morning, and I could not employ my time more agreeably than in conversation with an old friend."

I willingly complied with his request, and we were soon seated beside a comfortable fire, with "all appliances and means to boot," for making the evening pass with *spirit*.

"Now, Frank," said Musgrave, "before we commence, set my mind at rest about my family. Do you know anything of them?"

"It is some time since I saw them; but I heard a few days ago that they were all well."

"Thank you, thank you, my dear fellow; you have removed a load of anxiety from my mind. Fill your glass to 'auld langsyne,' and then we will talk over old scenes and old friends."

Long and confidential was our conversation, and varied were the feelings which it excited. There can be few more interesting events in a man's life than the unexpected meeting with a long absent friend. There is a mournful pleasure in recalling the past, in contrasting the sad experience of maturer years with the sanguine and glowing anticipations of our youth. For a few passing moments we forget the march of time, we look back through the long vista of years, and once more the warm, and joyous, and fresh feelings of youth seem to gush forth, and to soften and revive our world-seared and hardened hearts. So it was with *us*.

The present was for a while forgotten by us; we were living in the past; and loud and joyful were our bursts of merriment when we talked of old jokes and adventures; and then again the thought came over us, like a chilling blight, suffusing our eyes with tears, that the curtain of death had fallen over most of our young and cheerful fellow-actors on the early stage of life. It was with saddened and subdued hearts we dwelt upon the brief career of some of our early companions; and we sat for some minutes in silence musing upon the vicissitudes of human life. At last, with a forced attempt at merriment, Musgrave exclaimed, in the words of an old sea ditty—

"Come, grieving's a folly;
So let us be jolly;
If we've troubles at sea, boys, we've pleasures on shore."

" Replenish your tumbler, Frank," continued he; " we'll talk no more of the past—that's gone beyond recall—but let us make the most of the present. We have not many hours before us; and I have heard nothing of your adventures since we parted, nor you of mine. Set a good example, and begin."

" My story is soon told," replied I; " for, as you remarked before, time has been flowing on, for me, quiet and undisturbed. I have no adventures to relate—no stirring accidents by field or flood; mine has been a humdrum, peaceful life, unmarked by variety, except those common ones which would be uninteresting to a man of travel and adventure like yourself."

" Nothing connected with my old friend can prove uninteresting," said Musgrave; " so pray commence your tale."

Thus urged, I began as follows:—" I continued at school two years after you so suddenly left it, and was then bound apprentice to a lawyer in this town. I did not much like the profession which had been chosen for me; but there was no help for it. I knew that my father had no interest, and that I must trust entirely to my own exertions for a provision for my future life. I therefore applied myself diligently to my duties, and soon had the good fortune to gain the confidence of my employer. I had been with him about three years, when he sent me to a neighbouring village, to wait upon a client of his. This gentleman was a retired post-captain, a man who had seen much service, and had been often and severely wounded. He was, as I had been before informed, as smart an officer as ever trod a ship's deck; his whole heart was in his profession; and his long residence on shore had not broken him of his habit of interlarding his conversation with sea phrases; and he delighted in talking over the adventures of his past life to all who would listen to him. Notwithstanding his little peculiarities, he was universally loved and respected. He was a hospitable, kind-hearted man, and a 'gentleman of Nature's own making;' for, though he was a little wanting in external polish, his actions proved him worthy of the title. I had often heard of him before, but had never chanced to meet him. I was much pleased with him at first sight—there was so much warmth and frankness in his reception of me; and I felt at home with him in a minute. He was a man of short stature, upright as a dart, with iron-grey hair, and a keen, quick eye; and had on, when I met him in the avenue to his house, an old rusty hat, pinched up in the rims, and placed transversely on his head, so as to look like a 'fore and after,' as he called it, or, as we would say, a cocked hat."

" Oh," interrupted Musgrave, " you need not take the trouble of explaining sea terms to *me*; they are as natural to me as my native tongue almost."

" I forgot," replied I, " that you are a chip of the same block; so I will continue my *yarn*—you see I have picked up a little sea-lingo, too. After I had transacted my business with Captain Trimmer, he pressed me to stay and partake of family fare.

'We pipe to dinner at six bells,' said he; 'three o'clock, I mean. You will have plain fare and a sailor's welcome; which, you know, is a warm one either to friend or foe.'

I accepted his frank invitation with pleasure; and, as it still wanted an hour to dinner-time, he proposed that we should 'take a cruise' through the grounds till 'the grub' was ready. During the walk, he amused me greatly with his tales of the sea; but I was often obliged to request him to interpret for me terms which were unintelligible to me as Hebrew or Sanscrit. He laughed heartily at my ignorance, but did all in his power to enlighten me.

'You have not had the benefit of a sea education, so what can we expect from you? I'll tell you what, my young friend—I would as soon come athwart the hawse of a shark as a lawyer, (no offence to *you*,) but, somehow or other, I like the cut of your jib, and think we shall be good friends nevertheless.'

'Oh,' said I, laughing, alluding to my professional visit, 'I am not the lawyer, but the lawyer's *avant courier*—the pilot-fish, not the shark.'

He laughed heartily, and kept bantering me on the sharking propensities of my tribe in such an amusing manner that I could not restrain my mirth. At last, the dinner-bell rang.

'Ah! there's pipe to dinner at last! Come along, youngster; let's see if you can take your grub as well as you can take a joke.'

We dined alone; for his only daughter, he told me, had gone to visit a neighbour, and would not return till evening. The dinner was substantial and good; the wines excellent; but, though the old gentleman pressed me much to drink, he was very moderate himself. When the cloth was removed, he said—

'Now I will pipe to grog; if you like to join my mess, do so, unless you prefer your wine.'

'Why, if you have no objection,' said I, 'I will not desert this capital claret; you may have all the grog to yourself.'

" Well, tastes differ; of course, as a landsman, you prefer wine; but you know the old song says—

'A sailor's sheet anchor is grog.

He told me a number of his old adventures; and hours passed away like minutes in listening to them; but I am free to admit that none of his yarns were half so pleasant to me as some of the silken thread-ends he let fall about his daughter Emmeline. There was something in the rough manner in which he gave vent to the feelings of a father that possessed a tenderness which never could have been expressed by the soft vocables of sentimentality. It is thus (excuse my poetry) that we often admire the fragrance of a flower the more for the rough petals from which it emanates. I was captivated, and twitched the old gentleman on the string which yielded me the best music, till I thought he suspected some love-larking in my sly attempts to get him to praise the absent fair one.

'Come, come,' he said, 'mind your grog; although *I* say it, who shouldn't say it, she's as pretty a little craft as ever sailed the ocean of life; but we're not to take her in tow throughout all our voyages—so we'll drop her.'

'Not till I drink to her, with your leave, sir,' said I.

'Oh, as to that, there's no harm,' said he. 'All I say is, it's a pity you belong to the land sharks. If you'd been a seaman, I might have fancied you for a son-in-law.'

The words startled me; and, if he had had the keen perception of a refined man of the world, he might have augured something from the sound of my voice, though my words belied my thoughts.

'Well, here's to her!' said I; 'and may her fortune yield her a better cast up than a limb of the'——law, I would have said, but he roared out devil, with a laugh, and I joined him.

But, as I had a long walk before me, I was obliged to take my leave of the old gentleman rather early in the night. His daughter had not yet returned; but he was not uneasy on her account, as it was a fine moonlight night, and she was well acquainted with the road.

'Let me see you often, my young friend,' said the captain; 'I should like to become better acquainted with you. We always pipe to breakfast at nine o'clock, and to dinner at three. I hate your late shore hours. Come whenever you are inclined to do so. I shall be happy to see you.'

We shook hands and parted; and I was really quite sorry to leave my new and agreeable friend.

I was walking quickly along the road homewards; the moon was shining brightly, and the shadow of the high

hedge darkened half the road, when I thought I heard the sound of suppressed voices some short distance a-head of me. I stopped and listened, and, almost immediately afterwards, I saw two men creep out from the light side of the road, and, looking cautiously around, dart over into the shade. The stealthy motions of the men, and their evident wish for concealment, impressed me with a conviction that mischief of some kind was intended, and I was determined to watch their movements. I got through the hedge, and crept silently along the back of it, till I came to a kind of recess for holding stones, where I paused and listened. I again heard the murmur of voices near me, and, crawling quietly on, I came close behind the speakers, so near to them that I could distinctly hear every word they said, though I could not see them.

'She'll be here soon, Jem,' said one of them; 'we couldn't have had a better night for such a job.'

'Too much light for my taste,' replied the other; 'however, we must make the best on't. Our own mothers wouldn't know us in this disguise, and, without it, she would be too frightened to take particular notice of us. But are you sure she has the swag?'

'Certain. Smooth-faced Jess told me that her mistress was going to receive the rent for her father this evening.'

'Oh, that's all right; we'll save her the trouble of carrying it all the way home. It will be rather awkward though, if she has any one with her.'

'No fear of that. I was in the shrubbery when she was leaving the house; and I heard her refuse to have a servant with her. I took the short cut across the fields to join you; and I'm surprised she has not come up yet. She can't be long, however.'

This was a pleasant conversation for me to overhear; it was evident that robbery, if not murder, was about to be perpetrated, and I was as evidently destined to be a witness of the act. I might, to be sure, have sneaked out of the scrape, as the men were quite unconscious of my vicinity; but I could not bear the thought of deserting a fellow-creature in the hour of danger, without some attempt for her rescue—and yet what could I do? I was unarmed, except with a small walking cane, which would be of little avail against two ruffians, who were, of course, well provided with the means of offence. I was just meditating to crawl onwards, and endeavour to warn the expected female of her danger, when I was arrested by hearing one of the rascals murmur—'Here she is at last, Jem.' A light step was now heard; and, peeping through a gap in the hedge close beside me, I saw a female form fast approaching. The lady—for such she seemed by her dress—was walking along the illuminated part of the road, apparently unconscious of danger or fear; for she was humming a tune, and every now and then glancing up at the moon. The critical moment had arrived. I could almost *hear* the throbbing of my heart, I felt such a feverish impatience to put an end to my suspense; my nerves were strung to a pitch of desperation. I felt as if the strength of a dozen men were in my arm. I seized a large stone, and, crouching in the gap of the hedge, I waited with breathless impatience for the expected attack. The lady was nearly opposite me, when the ruffians rushed out upon her. There was a faint scream, a momentary struggle, and she lay on the ground at their feet. Their backs were turned towards me. During the noise of the scuffle, my footsteps were unheard, and I was close to them before they were aware.

'Silence! or I'll settle you!' said one of the robbers to his almost unconscious victim, whom, with all the coolness of fancied security, he was beginning to plunder. I dashed the stone I held in my hand into his face, and he fell senseless to the ground, with a heavy groan, while I shouted at the same time, as if addressing some one behind me, 'Now, Harry, blow the other rascal's brains out.' The other *rascal*, however, did not wait to see the result. He was over the hedge in a moment, and running for bare life. I pretended to follow him, shouting aloud till he disappeared into the next enclosure. I then returned to the road, where I found the man still lying senseless, though breathing heavily. I took the handkerchief from his neck, and bound his hands together; and, tearing the crape from his face, I took a long and steady look at his features, that I might be able to swear to his identity if necessary. The lady, who was fortunately unhurt, and had by this time recovered from her alarm, overwhelmed me with acknowledgments, which I parried as well as I was able; and I endeavoured to turn her thoughts into another channel, by requesting her to look at the face of the senseless man. After a little hesitation she did so, and immediately recognised him as an old servant of her father's—a worthless vagabond, who had been discharged for theft, and had vowed revenge. Hitherto I had had little time to take any particular notice of the appearance of the lady I had been so fortunate as to rescue. I had merely remarked the grace of her form, and the soft, sweet tone of her voice; but now that I had leisure to look at her features, as the moon-beam rested brightly upon them, I was struck with their beauty; I felt, as Byron has it—

> 'my sinking heart confess
> The might, the majesty of loveliness.'

I gladly offered to escort her to her home, which, she said, was only about half a mile distant, and where we could procure assistance to remove the still insensible footpad Before we set off, however, I took the liberty of securing his pistols, which could be of no service to him in his present state, but might materially benefit us. After a sharp walk of ten minutes, the lady stopped at a gate, which I immediately knew to be the one I had so lately left.

'Now, sir, I am at home; allow me to welcome to it my brave deliverer, and to introduce him to my father.'

'I require no introduction,' replied I, 'if you are, as I surmise, the daughter of Captain Trimmer.'

'Do you know him?—he is my father.'

'I only left him about an hour ago, and fortunate it was that I did not yield to his urgent wish for me to remain longer.'

Captain Trimmer listened in breathless anxiety as his daughter told the tale of her danger and deliverance; and, drawing a long breath when it was ended, he muttered, 'Heaven be praised!' He then rung the bell violently, and gave the servants orders and directions where to find the wounded footpad.

'And now, my dear young friend,' said he, 'what can I say to *you?* I can't say anything just now, my heart is too full; but there's my hand, and you shall find me, as long as I live, a firm and warm friend."

I could only press *his* affectionately in reply. He insisted upon my remaining where I was for the night, and dispatched a man on horseback to explain to my friends the reason of my absence. From this time my intercourse with the worthy captain became daily more intimate; almost every spare hour of my time was devoted to his society. As his character opened out upon me, I saw in his conduct so many proofs of genuine goodness of heart and rectitude of principle, that I felt as much affection and respect for him as for a dear and honoured parent. His daughter Emmeline, too, was one of those gentle retiring characters, who only require to be known to be admired, and whose virtues, like those of the sweet and modest violet, require to be sought after to be properly appreciated. I was always fond of music We all know its influence over the feelings—its power to awaken the hidden sympathies of the heart—to recall the joys and sorrows of the past, and to stir up glowing anticipations and high resolves for the future. Her voice was clear and sweet as a bird's; and

when she warbled over the melodies of her native land, I felt so much absorbed in the beauty of the strain, as almost to forget the singer. You smile, and anticipate the result. How could it be otherwise? How could I live in close and constant communion with one so fascinating, and escape the fascination? It is not amid the factitious glare and excitement of society that such characters as hers can be appreciated—there the tinsel too often glitters more brightly than the pure gold; but in the calm and peaceful intercourse of domestic life, their pure and gentle influence is felt and valued. I was becoming daily more and more an admirer of the gentle Emmeline, when the sudden death of my father awakened me from my dream of love, and startled me into serious consideration. He died as he had lived, poor—for it was found, on examining his affairs, that, though maintaining an appearance of wealth and comfort, his life must have been a constant struggle with difficulties, and there was barely sufficient left behind to satisfy the claims of his creditors. Deeply as I was grieved by his loss, I must say that feeling was not a little heightened by the disappointment of finding myself unprovided for. I had always been led to hope, that, though my father, from a wish to give me a spirit of independence, had left me, during my early life, to the exertion of my own energies for support, yet that at his death he would leave me a handsome competency. But this hope was now disappointed, and with it vanished my bright dreams of Emmeline and happiness. I could not bear the thoughts of exposing the woman of my heart to the risk of poverty and privation. She knew not of my love, and now she must remain for ever in ignorance of it; for what had I to offer her?—a heart, and nothing more; and you know, Musgrave, that, though *loving* hearts are very pretty things in *poetry*, *smoking* ones would better furnish forth a poor man's table. I gradually withdrew myself from the society of my good old friend, though it cost me many a severe pang to do so; and, whenever I did meet him, I had always some faltering excuse to make about press of business, ill health, or bad weather. I was talking to him one day, when Emmeline, whom I had not seen for some time, unexpectedly joined us. The conscious blood rushed to my face immediately, and I stammered out some incoherent apology, in reply to her expression of surprise at my long absence. The old man noticed my embarrassment, and became silent and thoughtful. At last, turning to his daughter, he said—'Emmeline, my love, see what we are to have for dinner; Mr Lorrimer will take family fare with us. Not a word youngster,' (to me, as I was beginning to remonstrate,) 'I am commanding officer here.' We walked on together for some time in silence; at last he stopped, and, taking my hand, while he looked full in my face, he said—

'I am not so blind, Mr Lorrimer, but I can see which way the land lies. I like to be fair and above board with every one; and you are not the man I shall break through the rule with. I like you, Frank Lorrimer; and I would do much to serve you. Emmeline—(ah! there go the red colours again!)—you love her, Frank!—win her and wear her if you can—you have my free and full consent. I have heard of your father's death and its results, and I understand and honour the motives that have induced you to absent yourself from us. I am not a rich man, but I have enough to make two young people happy, and I know no one to whom I would more joyfully confide my daughter's happiness than to yourself."

Kind, generous old man! I had not a word to say. I merely pressed his hand in silence and tears. Yes, tears; for joy can weep as well as grief. I was soon again a constant visiter at Oak Lodge; and, in a few months, I had the happiness of calling Emmeline my own. I have been now married three years, and have every day greater cause to bless the happy chance which first led me to Oak Lodge. My excellent father-in-law lives with us, and delights in spending his day in nursing his little grandchildren. Long may he be spared to us!"

"What! married and a father! O Frank, what a fortunate fellow you have been! Here have I been buffeting about the world for years, the shuttlecock of fate, hunting fortune in every corner of the world, and I return home, poor and penniless as the day I left it. I, whose early dreams were all of the happiness of a married life, shall sink into my grave a solitary bachelor, without one loved hand to tend my pillow, and to smooth my passage to the tomb."

"Oh, nonsense. Cheer up, Musgrave," said I; "I shall dance at your wedding yet. But why need you care now about the scurvy tricks of fortune abroad, since you have returned to enjoy her favours at home?"

"Favours! What do you mean, Frank?"

"Have you not heard of the death of your poor brother George, and that the law-suit in which your father was so long engaged has terminated favourably for him He is now in possession of a rental of three thousand per annum, to which, of course, you will be heir?"

"Heavens! you don't say so!" exclaimed Musgrave; "but I am sure you would not deceive me. I have not heard from home for upwards of a twelvemonth. Frank, you are a fine fellow; shake hands with me."

"Ay, that I will," said I; "and I congratulate you with all my heart. I am glad I have been the first to communicate such pleasing intelligence; and now, the least you can do in return is to give me an account of yourself since we parted."

"Why, I'm not in the best mood in the world for story telling," replied Musgrave; "this unexpected good fortune has rather destroyed my equilibrium; however, I will brush up my memory for your gratification, though the retrospect will be anything but agreeable to myself. You remember I daresay, the day when I left school; on my memory, at least, the recollection of it is as vivid as if it were yesterday. When I drove away in my uncle's carriage, I thought I was going home on a temporary visit, and little imagined I was never to return. When I arrived at home, I found in the drawing-room, with my father, a little, active, dark looking man, with a stern, prompt manner, who was introduced to me as Captain Fleetwood.

'Richard, my boy,' said my father, 'you have often expressed a wish to go to sea, and I have now an opportunity of gratifying you. My friend, Captain Fleetwood, has volunteered to take you out with him as midshipman; and, as I know I could not intrust you to better hands, I am glad to avail myself of his offer. The warning is rather a short one, as you must be on board your ship within a fortnight; you have no time to lose; and I will accompany you to town to prepare your equipment. We will leave this to-morrow morning at nine o'clock."

I was rather staggered by this sudden announcement; for though it had always been the dearest wish of my heart to go to sea, yet there was something so unexpected in the accomplishment of it, that I half repented of my choice. My heart sank at the thought of such a sudden parting from home and all that was dear to me; besides, as I had just left school, I would have preferred having a few days' holiday, and an opportunity of strutting in my sailor's dress' before the eyes of my admiring schoolfellows. However, there was no help for it now—my lot was cast for life; and, in a fortnight's time, I was fairly shipped on board the Anne, a snug free-trader, bound to the East Indies. I pass over the various details of my early career; you may find an accurate description of my first feelings and impressions, and those of five hundred others, on first joining a ship, in any circulating library in the kingdom. I encountered the usual hardships, and was exposed to the usual privations incidental to the life of a sailor; but, as there was nothing particularly worthy of notice in the first seven or eight years

of my sailor's life, I shall pass at once to the most interesting event in a career of no trifling variety. It is now upwards of two years since I went out chief mate of my old ship, under the command of my first friend, Captain Fleetwood, who was a clever, active seaman himself, and well qualified to make those under him the same. We had a crew of twenty-five young and able fellows, with, as usual, a sprinkling of black sheep among them. Our passengers were four in number—a gentleman and his wife, and two young ladies, going out to Bombay under their protection; all agreeable and well-informed people, and the young ladies blessed with a tolerable share of beauty. Time passed very pleasantly with us, for we were uncommonly favoured in winds and weather; and our captain, who was as kind and benevolent as a man, as he was strict and unflinching as an officer, delighted in promoting, to the utmost, every plan for the comfort and amusement of the crew.

'Och, isn't he a broth of a boy, now, that captain of ours?' I heard one of our men say to another, on one of the quiet tropical evenings, when the crew were enjoying themselves in the 'waist,' and the captain was whirling one of the ladies round in a waltz on the quarterdeck. 'He's as full of fun as a monkey.'

'Take care you don't shave the monkey too close, though, Mike, or perhaps the *cat* will shave *you*.'

'Is it the *cat* you mane?' replied Mike; 'then, be the powers, it's myself that's not afeerd of the 'cat,' for she never wags her tail here but when a man's either an ass or a skulk, and no man can say black's the white of the eye of Mike Delaney. But I say, Tom, is'nt this been an out and out passage? Why, we've had nothin to do but to spin yarns and knot them; we might have stowed away the reef-points in the hold, we've never had no 'casion for them; and as for salt water, we haven't had a breeze to wash our faces for us since we left home. Blow'd if we sha'nt get too fine for our work by and by—reg'lar gentlemen afloat. I think I'll sport a pair of them over-alls that the long-shore beggars calls gloves, to keep my flippers white,' said Mike—at the same time spreading out a pair as dirty as the back of a chimney, and as broad as the back of a skate.

'Gloves and *delegate* flippers like that!' answered his companion; 'no, no, Mike—'twould be sin and a shame to *hide* it; that's a regular dare-devil hand—it cares neither for soap nor water. But, Mike, the voyage is not half over yet. We've had a fair weather passage so far; but I'm always afeerd of these unkimmon fine beginnings; ev'ry thing goes by contraries in this here world, and a good beginning often brings in its wake a bad ending. It's not in the coorse of nature to see sich a long spell of fine weather; it's quite unnatural; it 'ill break out, by and by, in a fresh place—see if it don't. That 'ere butcher, the sea, lies there a-smiling at us as if we were so many hinnocent lambs; but he'll maybe have his hand on our throats yet. As the player man said at Wapping, we are like hinnocent wictims a dress'd for the haltar, and a smiling in the face of our hexecooshnar.'

'Well, Tom, it's never no use smelling mischief afore it comes; time enough when it does shew its ugly mug, to grin in its face. I'm not the man to turn my back on it—nor you neither, for that matter, I'll be bound.'

We had run nearly thirty-four degrees to the south of the equator, when the weather became very variable, and the wind at last settled into a strong breeze from the northward. One evening, we were spanking along with the wind in that quarter, with a heavy confused sea, when a thick gloom gradually overspread the sky, and the mercury, falling in the barometer, gave warning of approaching bad weather. All our small sails were taken in, and every necessary precaution adopted to prepare for a change. Our topsails were reefed, and the mainsail was hauled up and handled. About six P. M., Captain Fleetwood came on deck, and asked what I thought of the weather.

'Bad enough, sir; it does not seem to have made up its mind what to do; however, we are tolerably well prepared for a change, whichever way it may be.'

'You must keep a sharp look out, Musgrave; if it should begin to rain, depend upon it the wind will chop suddenly round to southward; you must not let it take you unawares.

'I'll look for it in time, sir.'

He had scarcely left the deck, when a light drizzling rain came on, a partial lull succeeded, and the wind veered suddenly round to the south-westward. We were prepared for it, however, and our yards were soon trimmed to the wind; but our troubles were only beginning. The breeze freshened up so rapidly that we had barely time to take in sail fast enough; no sooner was one reef in, than it became necessary to take in another. The sea was running, as landsmen say, mountains high; the winds howled through our rigging; and the giant albatrosses hovered round us, seen indistinctly for a moment through the gloom, and then soaring away on the gale, as if they were floating down a stream—their enormous wings extended, but motionless.

The men were aloft, close-reefing, and preparing to furl the foretopsail, when a heavy sea struck the ship, and a sudden squall laid her over on her beam-ends almost. The sudden jerk carried away the topmost backstays. There was no rolling tackle on the topsailyard, which jerked violently as the ship fell over, and the mast snapped just above the parrell. Five of the poor fellows were thrown off the topsailyard to leeward; we heard their cries dying away on the breeze; we could not see them, the weather was so thick, and darkness was coming on; and as for saving them, the attempt to do so would have been madness, although several men sprung forward to volunteer. It was with heavy hearts the men set to work to clear away the wreck; the cries of their poor shipmates were still ringing in their ears, and an hour or two elapsed before it was accomplished. All night long, we were hard at work, furling sails and sending down yards and masts; and when the morning appeared, the ship was hove to, with her head to the south-eastward, under a storm-staysail. The decks were lumbered with wet sails, the main and mizen topgallantmast and yards, and the remnants of canvass and rigging saved from the wreck of the topmast. We spliced the main-brace, or, as you would say, served out drams; and the helm being lashed a-lee, the ship's company were sent below to obtain the rest they stood so much in need of. Poor fellows! they were not allowed to enjoy it long.

'Where is the captain?' said the carpenter, rushing up the quarter-hatch with a face like a ghost; 'where is the captain?'

'Well, Soundings,' said Captain Fleetwood, 'what do you want with me?'

'It's just about the soundings, sir, I want to speak to you.' Then, drawing close to his side, he muttered, 'There are four feet water in the well, sir."

The captain started, but recovered himself immediately.

'Very well. Rig the pumps directly. Mr Musgrave, call the hands out; the ship has taken a little too much water in, over all. Heaven grant it's nothing worse!' murmured he.

The scene around us was now dreary and desolate in the extreme: the sky was dark, gloomy, and threatening; light, angry-looking, discoloured clouds flitted over it, like spirits disturbed, while overhead the scud careered with lightning like rapidity; the sea was covered, as far as the eye could reach, with white foam, and the spray was blown over the ship in a constant heavy shower; the little "Mother Carey's chickens" were dipping their tiny wings in the waves under our stern, and the stormy petrel and albatross swept in wide circles round our storm-tossed vessel. The

gale howled mournfully through our rigging, and every now and then a giant sea dashed against our side, and threw torrents of water over our decks. The hatches were battened down fore and aft, and the monotonous clanking of the pumps was heard, mingled with the loud cheers of the men as they spirited each other up to renewed exertions, and the loud "spell oh!" when the different gangs relieved each other at the pump brakes. The whole of that day was one of incessant labour; for when, after some hours of hard work, we had gained considerably upon the water, and relaxed a little from our exertions, we found that renewed efforts were required to keep the enemy at bay. Next morning the wind had greatly decreased, and was gradually dying away; but a high sea was still running, and the ship laboured tremendously. More sail was made to steady her; but, in spite of all our efforts, the leak increased; and at last it became evident, after everything had been done which seamanship could propose, or perseverance carry into effect, that the ship was in a foundering state. The captain, who had shewn himself active and energetic during the excitement of the storm, now proved that he possessed that true courage which can face unflinchingly the slow, but sure approach of danger and of death. Calm and collected, nay, even cheerful, at least in appearance, his example encouraged and animated the crew, now almost exhausted with their constant exertions. He ordered one watch below to their hammocks, while the other were busied in fitting the boats, and preparing provisions to put into them, and in keeping the pumps steadily, but slowly at work. At last the hands were called out—'Out boats!' and when they were all assembled, Captain Fleetwood addressed them as follows:—

'My lads, the ship is sinking under us, and we must take to the boats. You have been active, patient, and obedient hitherto—be so still, and you may yet all be saved. Remember, that, as long as *one* of your officers is above the water with you, to that officer you owe obedience. For my part, I am determined—and you know I am no flincher—to maintain my authority with my life; but I hope you will not put me to the proof. My intention is to steer for the island of Tristan d'Acunha, which, if Providence favours us, we may reach in a week or ten days; but much depends upon your own exertions. Now, go below, and take the last meal you will ever eat on board your old ship; heaven grant we may all meet once more on shore!'

The men listened in silence, and uncovered while he spoke; and when he ended, they burst into a loud cheer, and one of them shouted out—

'We will stand by you till the last, sir.'

'Ay, that we will!' was responded by all.

The captain took off his hat, and bowed, evidently much affected, and dismissed them.

In about twenty minutes, they were again called up, and the boats were hoisted out. We had two quarter-boats, a launch, and a jolly-boat, which were amply sufficient to hold our whole number, reduced as it was by the loss of the five poor fellows in the gale; one of the quarter-boats, however, proved to be so leaky when lowered into the water, that we were obliged to abandon her. The other boats were furnished with masts, sails, a fortnight's short provision and water, arms—everything, in fact, that could be thought of as likely to be necessary. The captain took charge of the launch, and the second mate and I cast lots for the cutter; the chance was against me, and I took command of the jolly-boat. We were eight-and-twenty in number; twelve men, the captain, and two of the passengers in the launch; myself, one of the ladies, and four men, in the jolly boat; and the remainder in the cutter. The little jolly looked like a cockle-shell upon the water; but I knew her to be an excellent sea-boat, and I felt more secure in her than I would have done in the cutter. She was one of those little clinker-built Cowes boats, which float as light, and almost as small, as a nautilus upon the water. When we had shoved off from the ship, we lay on our oars at some little distance, as if by mutual consent, to see the last of her; but the captain shouted out—

'Come, my lads, we have no time to spare; give the old craft one parting cheer, and let us make the best of our way.'

The men stood up, and, taking off their hats, gave three loud and lengthened cheers. The deserted ship seemed as if she heard and wished to acknowledge the compliment her head turned gradually towards us; she rose slowly and heavily before the swell, then dipped her bows deep into the water, gave a heavy roll, and sank to rise no more. A stifled groan broke from the men at this sad sight, which cast an evident damp over their spirits.

'Come, cheer up, my lads,' said the captain; 'we've seen the last of as good a craft as ever floated; but it's of no use being downhearted. Let us have a cheer for good success!'

The men caught his tone immediately, and their spirits rose when they saw how cheerfully he bore his loss. Tristan d'Acunha bore about S. 10° W., about 200 miles distant; and, as the wind had again drawn to the northward, we had every prospect of reaching it in the course of five or six days. For the first two days we went along merrily enough, with a fine steady breeze, and tolerably smooth water; but, on the afternoon of the third, the sky again became overcast, and there was every appearance of another 'round turn' in the wind. As night closed in around us, the captain hailed us from the launch, and desired us to keep as near together as possible, for fear of separation. This order we obeyed as long as we were able; but, in the darkness, we soon lost sight of each other, and the sound of our voices was drowned in the increasing noise of wind and sea. About ten o'clock, the wind suddenly shifted in a sharp squall; the sail was taken aback, and the little boat lay over for a moment as if never to rise again. Fortunately the haulyards gave way, and the sail went overboard, or she must have been capsized; as it was, she was nearly half-full of water. I immediately jumped forward to drag the sail in again, when, to my horror, I heard the sound of voices crying for help, to leeward: the sail had knocked two of the men overboard, and it was their dying cry we heard. We pulled round the boat, and shouted out to them; there was no answer—they were gone; they must have been half-drowned before they could get clear of the sail, which had fallen on the top of them. Our grief for their loss was soon absorbed by our fears for our own safety. There were now only three of us remaining—for the lady could be of no assistance—in a small boat, half-full of water; the wind and sea rising, darkness all around, and the nearest land upwards of one hundred miles distant; our prospects were dismal indeed. Fortunately for us, however, we had no time to brood over our misfortunes; the necessity for active exertion drove all thoughts but those of present danger from our minds. We baled the boat out as fast as possible, got the broken mast in-board, and made all as snug as we could. The wind had shifted, as I said before, to the southward, and came on to blow fresh; and the sea was again rapidly rising. We had nothing for it but to keep the boat right before the wind, although it carried us almost in a contrary direction to the course we wished to steer. Oh, what a long, long night that appeared!—it seemed as if it would never end! It was a work of considerable watchfulness and trouble to keep our little boat before the wind, but gallantly did she behave; and I almost cheered with delight as she rose, buoyant as a duck, on the breast of the following seas.

At daylight, we looked anxiously around for the other boats; but in vain did we strain our eyes—nothing was

visible. Sad were our forebodings as to the fate of our shipmates, and gloomy our anticipations of the future for ourselves. The wind had moderated considerably, but we were still obliged to run before it; and it was not till late in the afternoon that we considered it safe to turn the boat's head again to the southward. By this time it was almost calm, but our two oars could do little against the head sea; and, after tugging away at them for some time, we were obliged to lay them in from sheer exhaustion, merely keeping the boat's head to the sea. A light breeze springing up at last from the northward, we got the stump of the mast up, and set the reefed sail upon it, and began slowly to make headway in the wished-for direction.

During the whole of our perilous voyage, the young lady, who had been committed to my charge, behaved with the greatest courage and resignation: not a complaint escaped her lips, though she was drenched to the skin by the spray and rain; not a scream did she utter when the dark sea rose under our stern, threatening to engulf our little bark. We did all we could to make her as comfortable as circumstances would allow; for rough indeed must be the nature that does not feel kindly towards youth and beauty in distress. She received all our attentions with such heartfelt expressions of gratitude, and bore her discomforts with such cheerful resignation, that the men could not help audibly expressing their admiration, and vowing to spend their life's blood in her service.

The sun was again smiling over our heads, and the water rippled under the bows of the boat as she danced before the breeze; and our spirits were revived by the change. On examining our stock of provisions, we found that most of our biscuit was completely saturated with salt water, and that, with the most sparing economy, we had barely sufficient rum and meat left to last us for a week longer. We immediately spread the wet bread on the boat's thwarts to dry, and cut the meat into small equal portions.

'Now, Miss Neville,' said I, laughing—though, heaven knows, there was little joy in my heart—'I, as commander of this vessel, constitute you acting-purser; you shall serve out our rations to us equally and fairly, and, if any one of my ship's company shall dare to question the justness of your division, or to attempt to help himself without your permission, he shall feel the weight of my anger.'

There was a *faint* laugh at this *faint* attempt at pleasantry on my part; and Miss Neville replied—

'I think, *Captain* Musgrave, you might have appointed a more sufficient purser than myself; however, I will do my best to justify your choice.'

Another day, and another, we kept crawling slowly on; there was little or no wind, and our two oars made but little way. I said before that the boat's crew was reduced to two men and myself. One of these men, a Scotchman, named M'Farlane, had only lately recovered from a severe attack of illness, before we left the ship. The fatigue incurred during the gale, and the danger and excitement of our situation since, had a fatal effect upon the poor fellow's already shattered constitution; he suffered in silence, never uttering a word of complaint; but it was evident to us all that he was sinking fast. On this day, he had been taking his turn at the oar, in spite of my remonstrances.

'You will kill yourself, M'Farlane,' said I. 'You are not strong enough to pull; take the helm, and give Riley the oar again.'

'No, sir,' replied he; 'Riley has had his spell, and I will take mine, though I die for it. I feel that I am going; but let me die in harness. No man shall have it to say that Tom M'Farlane was not game to the last.'

Miss Neville joined her entreaties to mine, that he would give over rowing; but in vain.

'Heaven bless you, ma'am said he!—'and it will bless you, and bring you in safety out of your dangers. You are just beginning the voyage of life—and a rough beginning it has been; but never fear. You'll make a happy port at last. As for me, my voyage is just over. I have had both rough and smooth in my time. I've had no cause to complain; and I shall die happy if I die doing my duty.'

The words were scarcely uttered, when he ceased rowing. I turned round, and saw him, with his face deadly pale, bending over the oar, which he was in vain endeavouring to dip in the water. He made two or three convulsive movements, as if in the act of rowing—muttered 'Hurrah, my lads!' and, with a heavy groan, fell backward. Riley and I raised him immediately; blood was gushing from his nose and mouth, which we in vain attempted to staunch. He opened his eyes once, shuddered, and expired. I will not attempt to describe the feelings with which we gazed upon the body of our unfortunate shipmate, and thought how soon a still more dreadful doom might be ours. Death, with all its horrid accompaniments of starvation, drowning, &c., came before us. All the horrible stories we had heard of deaths at sea, of misery, hunger, and cannibalism, came crowding upon our memories. At last, the silence was broken by Riley, who growled out—

'Well, there's one more going to feed the fishes! It 'll be our turn soon. However, it's some comfort he has left his share of the grub behind: there 'll be more for those who remain.'

I could hardly restrain my anger at this cold-blooded speech; but a look from Emily Neville checked me. Riley, however, observed the impression his words had made upon me, and, with a diabolical sneer, said—

'You need not look so black about it. I don't care a button about your looks or your anger either. One man's as good as another now, and I won't obey you any longer.'

'Riley,' said I, starting forward, and seizing him by the collar, while my voice trembled with suppressed passion, 'mark my words! As long as one plank of this boat hangs to another I am your officer; and while I have life in my body you *shall* obey me.'

The scoundrel was staggered by my firmness, and sat gloomily down upon the 'thwart.' Riley had been one of our *black-sheep* on board the Anne. I never liked the fellow. He was always a skulking, discontented vagabond; ever foremost in mischief, and striving to make his shipmates as mutinous as himself. I saw, by his lowering looks, and his sullen, dogged manner, that we must, before long, come into collision again, and I determined to prepare for the worst. I threw all the fire-arms over-board, except a single musket and a brace of pistols, the latter of which I loaded deliberately before his eyes. There had been a cutlass or two in the boat, but I supposed they had been lost in the squall, as I had not seen them for the last day or two.

'Come,' said I, 'the sun is long past the meridian, we must pipe to dinner. Miss Neville, serve out our allowance, if you please.'

While Riley received his modicum of spirits, he growled out—'Here's a pretty allowance for a hard-working man. Not a stroke more will I pull till I get more rum.'

'Not a drop more shall you have till the regular time; you must be contented with just enough to keep soul and body together, like your neighbours; we must not all be sacrificed to gratify your greediness.'

'Better die at once,' said he, 'than starve by inches; a short life and a merry one for me!—so hand out the stuff at once, for have it I *will*.' And he made a rush to snatch the spirits from Miss Neville.

'Back, scoundrel!' said I, cocking one of my pistols, 'or I'll blow your brains out.'

The words were scarcely out of my mouth, when the

rascal stooped, and, snatching up a cutlas which he had concealed in the bottom of the boat, made a cut at me with it, which, but for the tough rim of my leather hat, would have laid my skull open. As it was, I shall carry the scar to my grave. One touch of my trigger, and Miss Neville and I were left in the boat alone. The ball went through his head; he staggered against the gunwale, toppled overboard, and sank at once, tinging the water with his blood. Miss Neville was now obliged to act as doctor, as well as purser. She washed my wound, and bound it up as well as she was able. We neither of us spoke; but fearful were the thoughts that passed through my mind. The boat lay becalmed upon the water; my strength, wounded as I was, could do little towards forcing her onwards. Unless a breeze sprung up, we must lie in utter helplessness, and die a lingering death by starvation! Miss Neville read my thoughts, and, stifling her own fears, exerted herself to inspire me with confidence.

'Fear not, Mr Musgrave,' said she; 'the merciful Providence which has watched over us hitherto, will protect us till the end. Utterly helpless and hopeless as our situation appears at present, He *can* save us, and He *will*.'

Her words inspired me with renewed energy; and, with a good deal of difficulty, I stepped the mast, which we had unshipped for greater convenience in rowing. As the sun set, the smooth face of the water began to be dimpled with 'cats' paws' from the northward, and, at eight o'clock, a light and steady breeze sprung up from the same quarter. Our hearts bounded with gratitude to Heaven, as our small sail swelled in the wind, and the boat danced merrily over the waves. Next day, we made the land, and, before evening, after a little danger in passing the surf, I landed my precious charge in safety.

But I must hurry to the conclusion of my tale, for I see, Lorrimer, you are beginning to yawn, and I am tired of it myself.

My first care was to seek a snug shelter among the rocks, where I quickly lighted a fire, and shared with my fair fellow prisoner the last remains of our slender sea stock. For the next day's subsistence, we were obliged to rely upon my skill as a fowler. I spread the remainder of the powder to dry, and contrived to make up a rude bed for Miss Neville, on which, worn out with fatigue and excitement, she soon enjoyed that rest which she so much required. I retired to a little distance to watch her slumbers; but very soon followed her example. In the morning, invigorated and refreshed, I sallied out with my gun, and soon succeeded in procuring some birds for our morning meal; I then climbed the highest part of the island, and set up the boat's mast with a handkerchief flying from it, in hopes of attracting the attention of some passing South-Sea whaler. Weeks passed in dreary monotony; we wanted for none of the absolute necessaries of life; but we were prisoners, and that consciousness alone was enough to make *me* discontented and restless. My fair companion bore all her inconveniences unrepiningly, and did all in her power to soothe and comfort me; her sweet disposition and gentle, silent attentions, insensibly withdrew my thoughts from the discomforts of the present, and hope pictured a bright future of happiness with her whom fate had thrown upon my protection. One morning at daybreak, I climbed as usual to my signal post, and there, about three miles to windward of the island, a ship was standing under easy sail to the westward. I felt a choking sensation in my throat, and a tear of gratitude started to my eye, when I perceived that my flag had been observed. The ship was hove to, and a boat lowered. I rushed down to apprise Miss Neville of the joyful event, and we both hurried to the beach to receive our welcome visiters. After considerable difficulty, on account of the surf, they effected a landing, and were greeted by us with the warmest gratitude. The vessel, we were told, was the Medusa, South-Seaman, and had been out from England nearly two years; they had observed my flag some time before they hove to, and at first thought it had been left there by some former ship, as there were no settlers on the island at the time; but they fortunately saw me through their glasses, and determined upon landing.

The evening was closing in cloudy and threatening, the surf was beginning to run high, and everything indicated bad weather.

'Come, be quick!' said the captain of the Medusa, who was in the boat; 'jump in, we've no time to lose; there's a gale coming on, and I wouldn't wait two minutes longer for the world.'

As we were struggling through the heavy surf, a sudden roll of the boat threw me overboard, and in a moment I was swept some distance towards the beach. I swam for the shore immediately, as I knew it was in vain to attempt reaching the boat again, or to hope that they would risk their own lives, or the safety of the ship, by longer delay. I was an excellent swimmer, and reached the shore in safety, where I had the mortification of seeing the Medusa make sail, and haul off the land. I comforted myself, however, with the reflection, that Emily Neville was in safety, and that, if the captain of the Medusa was a *Christian*, he would return to take me off the island. That night a heavy gale of wind came on from the north-west, and a constant succession of stormy changes of wind and calm followed for some time. In about a month, a sale hove in sight; it was the Medusa! Oh, how delighted I was, once more to feel a solid plank under my foot! I felt myself at home once more when I touched her deck, and asked for Emily Neville. She was gone! The Medusa had fallen in with a Cape trader, and Miss Neville had taken a passage on board of her to the Cape, from whence she meant to proceed to England. Imagine my disappointment! For two months longer we beat about in these latitudes in the Medusa, and then, our cargo being completed, we shaped our course homewards. On my arrival in England, I went to my old friend, Darcy, who provided me with the needful, and I am now so far on my way home. You tell me I have gained a fortune; but I have lost the only girl I ever loved, and without her fortune is valueless."

I did what I could to comfort Musgrave, but he would not be comforted; the recollection of his disappointment overpowered him, and he hid his face in his hands, groaning audibly.

Next morning, he proceeded on his journey. A short time afterwards, there appeared in the papers the following announcement— "Arrived in the River, the Proserpine, from the Cape. This vessel has on board one of the survivors of the wreck of the ship Anne, which foundered at sea some months since; the lady was saved in one of the ship's boats, and taken off the island of Tristan d'Acunha by the Medusa whaler."

I immediately wrote to Musgrave, congratulating him on this happy event; and received an answer, in the course of a few weeks, telling me, that he was now amply repaid for his past dangers and disappointments; for Emily Neville had consented to become his wife, and to share with him the bounties, as she had before partaken with him of the harsher dispensations of Providence.

WILSON'S

Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE LEGEND OF FAIR HELEN OF KIRCONNEL.

The seat of a branch of the Dumfriesshire Maxwells—Kirconnel—a property lying not far distant from Dumfries, and surrounded by the little pastoral stream, Kirtle, is one of the most beautiful that ever gratified the taste or inspired the pride of a high family. It was not until about the beginning of the seventeenth century that it came into the possession of the Maxwells; for, during a long period, it belonged to the old, though never illustrious family of the Bells, who, amidst all the turmoil and strife of the march territories, had the good sense to prefer the quiet pleasures of the retreats of their own pure Kirtle, to the tumultuous and cruel scenes which boasted no streamlet but the heart's blood of revengeful foes. The power of Lord Maxwell, or the threat of Douglas, were equally unavailing to force the old proprietor of Kirconnel—though he ranked as a lesser baron, and might command retainers to fight for his plea—to sacrifice the pleasures of domestic peace on the altars of Laverna or Bellona—these conjunct goddesses who, hand in hand, swayed the destinies of Border men, and regulated the Border rights of *meum* and *tuum*. He held his fine property directly of the crown; and, so long as he fulfilled the conditions of his right, he conceived himself entitled to the enjoyment of what had been fairly got and honourably retained. One strong element in Kirconnel's determination to live at home, in the enjoyment of what home may produce to a mind capable of appreciating its sweets, was the fear of interrupting the happiness of his lady—one of the family of Irvings in that quarter, who latterly came to possess his property—and of one child, a daughter, the maid of Kirconnel, concerning whom, as all our readers know, more has been said and sung by antiquarian minstrel than ever fell to the hapless fame or treasured memory of fair woman. We need scarcely say, that this young heiress of Kirconnel's name was Helen; for, who that has read the touching lines of Pinkerton, can ever forget the name of one whose fate has drawn more tears than ever did that of the heroine Lady Margaret, in the old ballad of "Douglas' Tragedy?" The disasters of ordinary women, though hallowed by the sanctifying power of love, have seldom in this country inspired the harp of the minstrel; so far we are forced to admit the power of beauty, abstracted from the qualities of the mind and heart, that it has been a talisman to bardic genius in every age; yet it is honourable to the character of our nation, that the soul which illumines the "face divine," has called forth strains as melting and triumphant as ever were produced by the lineaments of physical beauty. It is, however, when the two qualities have been found combined in a favoured daughter of Scotland, that an unhappy fate has exercised its greatest power in producing a sympathy which has left no harp to sound fitfully in the willow tree, no heart in our true land untouched, and no eye destitute of sympathetic tears. Such has truly been the effect produced by the fortune of Helen of Kirconnel—a fortune which came up on the revolving wheel of the mutable goddess, notwithstanding all the efforts of her father to make the course of her life happy and its termination blessed. Abstracted as the thoughts were of the three inhabitants of Kirconnel—the lady, the laird, and the daughter—from the scenes that were ever changing in the warlike world around them, so much greater was the necessity for cultivating the opportunities of enjoyment that nature and fortune had awarded to them; and so much greater also was the relish for that enjoyment which has ever been found in minds and hearts properly constituted and tuned to the harp of goodness, to increase with possession as much as the false taste for stimulating avocations cloys with the easy surfeit. It is not often that, even in our virtuous land, and even in these days, when the humane virtues of a high civilization have inclined mankind to the cultivation of the social affections, that a family is found with its different members so predisposed for the harmony of exclusively domestic joys, that some chord does not occasionally give forth a discordant sound when touched by an external impulse; but, in the times of which we speak, and in the part of country where the individuals resided, "the happy family" was a group that was more often found in the lyrics of the poet or the creations of hope deferred than in the real existences of the troubled and vexed world.

The house of Kirconnel, where these individuals resided, stood on "fair Kirconnel Lee;" a term implying that the wood which in those days encompassed every baronial residence, had been, to a certain extent, cleared away, to allow the daisy covered lawn to rejoice in the beams of the generally excluded sun. But at a little distance, the empire of the forest was again resumed, on the condition exacted by nature, of allowing the winding Kirtle to enjoy her grassy bank, covered with the wild rose and the eglantine; and to roll playfully along her pebbly bed, unimpeded by the neighbouring trees, which, as if in amatory dalliance, sent down their straggling lips to kiss her as she went. The wood bower—in early times a species of rural retreat in much greater fashion than nowadays—was, in repetition of itself, seen rearing its ornamented walls, round which the native parasite plants were entwined in close embrace in various parts of the woody retreat. Some of these had been carefully looked to by the lady of Kirconnel herself, who, anxious to confirm her husband's resolution against engaging in the wars of the times, left no energy unemployed to render their residence, as well within the walls of the house as in the bowers and gardens, as pleasant to the eye as the fruits of her heart and mind were delightful to the rational and loving soul of her appreciating and grateful lord. As Sir Owain says—

> "Fair were her erbers with flowers—
> Rose and lili divers colours,
> Primrol and parvink;
> Mint, feverfoy, and eglantine,
> Colimbin, and mo there were,
> Than ani man mocht think."

The Graces had, as yet, but small influence in Scotland; but the Genius of Chivalry, a cognate spirit, was busy in effecting a great revolution in the minds of the inhabitants; and though there was little in him to humanize, there was much to elevate and beautify. Traces of his power might already be seen about the bowers and shades of Kirconnel, where some rude figures of knights in various positions—one rescuing a damsel from her enemies—one in the combat at outrance—one striking the palisades of an armed

city—placed, as they were, in the retreats of peace and domestic happiness by a former warlike possessor of the property, served the purpose of ornamenting the sequestered walks, and supplying to the peaceful and happy inhabitants a contrast between the pursuits of war and the pleasures of home, and home's blessed enjoyments.

At a little distance from the mansion or castle—for every house, in those days, had a castellated character—was and still is the burying ground of Kirconnel; a spot which, from the peculiarity of its situation, as well as from its own mournful associations, impressed the mind of the visiter with feelings which startled him, as much from their novelty as from their intensity. There is a small stone there that would, if deciphered and communicated to our readers, anticipate our story, and claim the ready tear before our own sympathies are relieved by our recital. We pass it by at present, to give some idea of the extraordinary spot where it lies. This ground of the dead, or "Death's Mailing," as it has sometimes been called, is invested with all the *charms* of a sublimed melancholy, which contemplates nature as a whole, and looks to those high purposes of her great Author in visiting poor mortals with their heart-chastening woes. At the time of which we speak, this place of the dead was entirely surrounded with high oaks and spreading elms, except where the silvery Kirtle embraced the hallowed spot, as she rolled slowly along—more slowly, it might almost appear, at this spot than elsewhere—and murmured a soft threnody in the ears of the guardian spirits, that there tended the clay forms which they once animated. A few very rude stones, whose rudeness was their greatest recommendation to the sentimental mind, told, in the quaint "old Inglis" of that day, their simple tale. "Here lyethe the race of ye sons of Kirconnelle," might have been seen on a rude freestone that has long since disappeared. "Terraughtie did choose to lie her," appeared upon another old relic; and some exhibited more simple tokens—still pointing out nothing more than name and surname, yet more eloquent in that brevity than the most "storied urn." "Jon Kirkpatrycke," "Andrew Welles," "Heln Johnston," "Mary of the Le'," without one word more to say what they were, where they lived, when they visited this scene of sorrow, and when they departed from it, possessed an eloquence in their simple brevity that moved the heart of the visiter with a power now little felt and less appreciated. The swelling green *tumuli*, with these simple speaking grey-headed stones, standing yet leaning to a side, as if themselves bent by the hands of time, how humbly might they appear, encircled as they were, with the proud monarch of the wood, the primeval oak, that had seen the sires and grandsires of the lowly inhabitants of "Death's Mailing" rise and fall, and become dust, as man contemplates the day-fly wing forth in the morning, live out its day, and die. Such was the romantic burying-place of Kirconnel at the time of which we speak; and even now, when the oak has fallen before the axe of civilization, and Fame's trump has sounded even over the tomb, the place has a hallowed and romantic character (the Kirtle is still there) not exhibited by other burying-grounds in Scotland.

In those retreats, the members of the family of Kirconnel passed the greater part of their time. Helen, though a lover of home, was fond of gratifying a fancy pregnant of beautiful images, and a taste for what is lovely in nature, by sitting by the banks of the Kirtle, and supplying her mind with the pabulum of the old Scottish romances. "Raf Coilyear and his Cross-bow," and "Gilbert with the White Hand," though soon superseded by the continental romances, were then the legitimate fountains of amusement to the fair maids of Scotland; and those who aimed at sublimer flights, might have had recourse to "Fyn Maccowl," or "Gret Gow Macmorne;" but there was in none of the works as yet circulated in Scotland, what might gratify the intense yearnings of the female heart for those poetical images which subsequently sprung up with the more mature growth of chivalry. The loves of warriors are not the loves of every-day life, far less the loves of the inspired poet; and Helen, as she read these old legendary romances, might find in them the amusement that afforded a relaxing alternative with her own poetical communings with the oldest bard of all—Nature; but for the inspiration of love itself she required the talisman—man—in that high aspect she had prefigured of the noblest of God's creatures, to rouse her heart from nature to the lover's dream.

As yet the maid of Kirconnel had not seen any individual that realized the idea she formed, by the banks of the Kirtle, of the individual who could call up in her young bosom those extraordinary emotions which constitute "love's young dream." The secluded mode of life adopted by her parents, was unfavourable to a choice of the talismanic objects; and it even appeared to be her father and mother's wish that such choice should be excluded, that her heart might, in the absence of many forms, learn to be pleased with the choice that their love or policy might point out to her adoption. A second cousin of her own, Walter Bell of Blacket House, had a free passport to the hall of Kirconnel, as well as to the bowers that were enshrined in Kirconnel woods. The laird saw in the young man his nearest heir, in the event of his Helen being taken from him by fate; and the lady could detect, as she thought, in Bell's quiet and sombre manner, some assimilation to her own love of retirement and ease, and a consequent disrelish of the warlike and sanguinary customs of the times. Yet it was known that the young laird of Blacket House had been engaged in secret frays between the Johnstones and Crightons; while, for some purpose not generally known, though, from what we have said, not difficult to be surmised, he had fought in disguise, and disclaimed the glory of having hewn off the heads of many Johnstones, whose deaths might have brought him renown, if not wealth. He had fought from a spirit of animosity and a thirst of blood, that lay deep buried in his heart, but which, along with its noisome fruits, he had striven to conceal, from the knowledge he possessed of the pacific disposition of his friends, the Kirconnels, whose good-will he had a motive to cultivate more powerful than that of wealth or glory. He wished to recommend himself to the fair Helen, by acquiring the love and esteem of her father and mother; and he doubted not that, by his own personal accomplishments—neither few nor unimportant—aided by the advice or power of parental love and authority, he would succeed in changing in her the old habitual feelings of ordinary friendship into the higher and purer sentiments of affection.

And sure it was that no one who ever aimed to acquire a "ladye's love," made his attempt with more advantages on his side than Walter Bell of Blacket House. The gay lover in the old romance, who cried that, with the advantage of making love in a wood, and by the side of a silver stream, he would gain the heart of the fairest woman of Christendom, though his face were as black as the coal slave's, and his lineage no better than the knave-child's, spoke more of human nature than he, perhaps, himself knew. But he spoke of women in the aggregate; and it is not unlikely that such a woman as fair Helen of Kirconnel had never come under the trial of his skill. The truth of the statement fell to be tested by one who, besides the advantages stated by the gay knight, could boast the consent of a father, old friendship, and a face and a lineage against which no exception could be taken by the admirers of graces and genealogy. Bell was aware of the advantages he possessed; but he could calculate the strength

of these better than he could fathom the mysteries of woman's heart. Although the greater part of his time was passed at Kirconnel, where he took every opportunity of threading the mazes of the oak woods, or sitting by the side of the Kirtle with the object of his affections, it is doubtful if he ever ascertained, by the passing indications she exhibited, that her thoughts and feelings were pitched much beyond the grade of those which nature had awarded to himself. She saw and felt beauties in the scenery of Kirconnel, which, to her lover, were but as the "sear leaf." Every object in nature—from the planet to the plant, from the shining levin of heaven to the phosphoric beam on the margin of the Kirtle—had some intelligence for her inquiring eye. Every power in operation around her—from the great general sympathy of nature's highest elements, to the loves of the little forest birds that sung their love-song in her bower—had some charm to elevate her thoughts and sublime her sentiments. She, therefore, who could search for intelligence where others saw nothing but inert matter, or, at least, the uninteresting indications of every-day nature, might probably have been an unfortunate object on whom our said romantic knight might try the effect of his extraneous charms of wood and water. Nor was she at all fitted for being acted upon by the love intrigues of her cousin of Blacket House, who, coming far short of a knowledge of the elevated sentiments by which she was inspired, could neither yield her that sympathy which a woman requires as a *sine qua non* of affection, nor stand the investigation of the shrewd wisdom or the high philosophy of the heart of an elevated woman. While he simply sued and used the ordinary words of love, she analyzed and found that, where she never could be understood, she never could dispose of her affections.

The mind of Helen had long been made up on the question of her cousin's suit. It had begun early; and the innumerable walks he had enjoyed with her along the banks of the Kirtle, had afforded him a thousand opportunities of declaring his passion. By the natural tact of women, she had always contrived to evade the question, and contented herself, even in the midst of extravagant declarations, with negative indications of her inability to return his passion. These he understood not; and, unfortunately, he acted upon the principle that has driven many a fond lover to despair, that the mistress who appears to listen without displeasure is presumed to give a tacit consent. They know little of the heart of woman who trust their happiness or their lives to the frail bark of such a fond and dangerous delusion. A woman will seldom put an end to the adulation that supports her pride; but the maid of Kirconnel, who had no pride to gratify, acted as many a single-hearted female has done and will do, who receives without a frown that her nature detests, but without a satisfaction that her honesty will not allow her to assume, the fond speeches of an old friend, couched in terms of an admiration which is only her due. The native sensibility of her soul shrank at the thought of first construing harshly her relation's professions of affection, and then telling him that he was not the individual who was qualified to win her heart. Yet, in justice to her, it requires to be stated, that she often communed with herself, in her solitary walks, on the necessity of checking her cousin's fond and unfortunate delusion, lest evil might come out of gentleness so nearly allied to good.

This unfortunate connection between Blacket House and his fair cousin, fated as it was to continue, assumed daily a more critical aspect. The young man, overwhelmed by a passion that was daily and hourly fed by the contemplation of a beauty and qualities seldom before witnessed in a Scottish maiden, was not only intoxicated by the violence of his love, but satisfied that his cousin, in return, loved him with an affection only more chastely expressed, though, of course, not less powerful than his own. Her parents, too, who had lent a fond and willing ear to his statements of their daughter's love for him, had made up their minds upon a point which presented all the appearances of being sealed and settled by her who had the greatest interest in its truth. She was always to be found by him in her solitary walks among Kirconnel woods. Their meetings were favoured by their parents; their walks were uninterrupted; the current of his passion flowed without check, and his expressions only varied in becoming more animated. The absence of a *harsh denial* filled the measure of a deluding, blending hope; and while the courses of their two minds were in directions entirely opposite—his along the rose-strewed valley of a requited affection, hers in a channel that led to objects too brilliant for his dull eye to scan, and too sublime for his unfledged fancy to reach—he conceived that a mutual sympathy of congenial feeling animated both their hearts.

It was at this extraordinary state of the domestic affairs of Kirconnel, that an extraneous cause gave a new current to the feelings of the young maiden without having the effect of changing that of her lover, or of opening the eyes of her father and mother to the true fact, that she could not love the man they intended as her husband. A gallant, high-spirited youth, one of the Flemings of Kirkpatrick, had followed a doe up to within a very short space of Kirconnel House. The timid creature had taken to the water, and, springing on the opposite bank, fled past a bower in which Helen was at the time sitting reading Sir Tristam, then in the hands of every young lady in Scotland and England. She started as the creature shot past her, and, putting her head timidly forward to get a better view of the fleet inhabitant of the forest, saw before her, with cap in hand, bowing, in knightly guise, Adam Fleming of Kirkpatrick. Neither of the two had before seen the other; but the fame of the one's noble mein, high mind, and martial virtues, and of the other's incomparable beauty and elevation of sentiment, had reached reciprocally their willing ears.

"That a Fleming of Kirkpatrick," said the youth, still bowing humbly and smiling, "should have had the boldness to interpose the image of his worthless person between the fancy and the heaven of the meditations of fair Helen of Kirconnel, doth, by my sword, require an apology. Shall I be still bolder in asking a pardon?"

The effect produced on Helen's mind by the noble figure of the youth, and the romantic and playful turn he had given to his intrusion, was quick and heartfelt. It was, besides, simultaneous with the memory of his spread fame; and, in an instant, her face was in a glow of mixed shame and confusion, the causes of which, perhaps, lay deeper than the locality of a mere feeling of surprise or interruption.

"You have my full forgiveness, sir," she replied, while her face glowed deeper in spite of her efforts to appear unaffected.

Her soft musical voice fell on the ear of the youth; but his keen, dark eye was busy with the examination of charms with which his ear had been long familiar. The blush of a woman is a man's triumph; whatever may be its secret cause, the man will construe it favourably to himself, in the face of a denial of his power; and so far at least he has the right, that Nature herself evidences in his favour by an acknowledgment that he has touched the fountains of the heart. Fleming was not different from other men; and, though he might have been wrong in his construction of the secret moving impulse which called up the mantling adornment of beauty that was almost beyond the power of increase, he felt the full power of the effect he thought he had produced, and, conceiving himself favourably received, laid in his heart the germs of an

affection that was to govern his destiny. The forms of breeding, more punctilious in those days of chivalry than even now, forbade farther communication at that time, and, bowing gracefully as he drank up the rays of her blushing beauty, he bounded away after his dogs that had kept their course in pursuit of the flying doe.

This was the first time that ever Helen had seen a stranger huntsman cross Kirconnel Lee in pursuit of his game; but it was soon to appear that roes and does, when pursued by the gallant Fleming, seemed to think that, in the recesses of Kirconnel, they might find that safety which was denied them in other coverts; at least it became certain that more of that kind of game fled before the hunter over Kirconnel Lee, after the meeting we have described, than ever were seen before by man or maiden. Meanwhile, the image of the noble youth, with his clear, intelligent eye; his rising and expanded forehead, from which his black hair was shaded to a side, and mixed with the long flowing locks that reached down to his shoulders; his intellectual expression of countenance, where beauty sat enshrined among the virtues; his breeding; his modesty; his voice and general bearing—were all busy with the fancy of the maid of Kirconnel. Nature's talisman had been applied, and the charm had wrought in its highest and most mysterious power. Nor less had been the effect of that first meeting on the mind of the youthful heir of Kirkpatrick. They loved; and the does which afterwards brushed over Kirconnel Lee were only the scouts of the hunting lover, who, while he could not help the choice of the flying wilding in taking that direction, could not, of a consequence, avoid a repeated *intrusion* on the wood-bower privacy of her who longed to see him with a heart that palpitated at his coming as strongly as did that of the flying deer. The rules of breeding direct all their force against a first interview; against a second, though brought about in the same way as the first, they have no efficacy; and love, which defies the whole code, soon reconciled differences which he despised. A few meetings revealed to each other that fact, which, somehow or other, is discovered by nobody but lovers, that one person has been intended from the beginning of the world to be formed for another. The heir of Kirkpatrick and the maid of Kirconnel exhibited to each other such a similarity of thought, feeling, and sentiment, that love seemed to have nothing more to do than to tie those threads which nature had not only spun, but hung forth with a predisposed reciprocity of communication. The discovery that their thoughts had taken the same range, and reached an equal altitude of elevation, carried with it that pleasant surprise that is always favourable to the progress of the tender passion; and the delight of a new-born sympathy in sentiments that had long gratified only the heart in which they were conceived, but which now were seen glowing in the eyes of another, was only another form of that passion itself.

Though Helen had seen many indications that might have satisfied her (if her mind had been directed to the subject) that her father and mother were bent upon a match between her cousin of Blacket House and her, she had never, either from a want of courage or steady serious thought on the subject, put it to herself what was her precise predicament or condition, on the supposition of such circumstance being in itself true and irremediable. She had hitherto had no great need for secrecy, because she did not love another; and her father, mother, and lover, having taken it for granted that she was favourable to her cousin's suit, nothing of a definite nature had ever transpired to call for a demonstration, on her part, as an alternative of dishonesty and double-dealing. Her situation was now changed. She now loved, and loved ardently, another; and the necessity she felt of meeting the heir of Kirkpatrick in secret, brought out in full relief her secret sense of what were the views and purposes of her father and mother, and all the responsibility of her negative conduct, as regarded the suit of him she could never love. But, strange as it may seem, if she felt a difficulty in correcting her cousin and disobeying her parents before the accession of her love, she felt that difficulty rise to an impossibility after that important event of her life. She trembled at the thought of her love being crossed; one word of her rejection of the suit of her cousin would reach the ears of her parents; dissension would be thrown into the temple of peace; her love would be discovered; her lover, a man famous of arms, and an aider of the Johnstones, the opponents of Blacket House, traced, rejected, and banished; and her heart finally torn and broken by the antagonist powers of love and duty. She felt her own weakness, and trembled at it, without coming to a resolution to make a disclosure; while her overwhelming love carried her, on the moonlight nights, over Kirconnel Lee, to meet her faithful heir of Kirkpatrick, in the romantic burying-ground already described. This extraordinary place was that fixed upon by the lovers for their night meetings; for, in any other part of the domains of Kirconnel, they could not have escaped the eye of Blacket House; who, though he had no suspicion of a rival, was so often in search of the object of his engrossing passion, that she seldom went out without being observed by the ever waking and vigilant surveillance of love.

Many times already had Helen waited till her unconscious parents retired to the rest of the aged, and the moon threw her sheet of silver over Kirconnel Lee, and, wrapped up in a night-cloak, slipped out at the wicker wicket of the west inclosure, to seek, under the shades of the oaks, Death's Mailing, the appointed trysting place of the ardent lovers. Again, she was to see her beloved heir of Kirkpatrick, and, at last, she had resolved to break to him the painful position in which she was placed, by the still existing belief of her parents and Blacket House, that she was to be his wedded wife. On this occasion, she sat wistfully looking out at her chamber window. Her father and mother had retired to their couch. Everything was quiet, the wind stilled, and the mighty oaks whispered not the faintest sigh to disturb the sensitive ear of night. The moon was already up, and she was on the eve of wrapping her cloak round her, and creeping forth into the forest shade, when she observed the long shadow of a man extending many yards upon the shining grass of the green lee. The figure of the individual she could not see; for a projection of the building, sufficient to conceal him, but not to prevent his shadow from being revealed, interrupted her vision. She hesitated and trembled. If the shadow had moved and disappeared, she could have accounted for it, by supposing that some of the domestics had not yet retired to bed; but why should a man stand alone and stationary at that hour, in that place, in that position? Her fears ran all upon Blacket House, who was never happy but when in her presence or near her person; and who had been on a former occasion, reported by the servants to have lain and slept under her window for an entire night, and never left his position till the morning sun exposed the doting lover to the wondering eyes of the domestics, who had never yet felt a love that kept them awake for more than a dreamy hour at cockcrow. As she gazed and hesitated, her hour was passing, and her lover would be among the grave-stones, waiting for her. Her anxiety grew intense; she feared to go, but shook at the thoughts of disappointing *him*; never dreaming (so whispered love) of herself. The figure still stood as stationary as a grave-stone, while her soul was agitated like the restless spirit that hovers over it, sighing for the hour of departure to the regions of ether. She could bear

no longer; the projection which concealed him would conceal her; she plied the furtive steps of love; and, crossing like a fairy on the moonlit, green knowe, the rising lawn, was forth among the towering oaks in as little time as the shadow of a passing cloud would have taken to trail its dingy traces over the shining lee.

In a short time she arrived at the churchyard, and saw, through the interstices of the surrounding trees, the heir of Kirkpatrick sitting on a green tumulus, the grave of one who had doubtless loved as they now loved, waiting for her who was beyond the trysting-hour. In a moment longer she was in his arms, and the stillness of the dead was invaded by the stifled sighs, the burning whispers, the rustling pressure of ardent, impatient lovers. The rising graves, and the mossy tomb-stones, and the white scattered bones that had escaped the sexton's eye and glittered in the moonbeams, were equally neglected and overlooked; and no fear of fairy, ghost, or gnome, or gowl, entered where love left no room but for his own engrossing sacrifices. The simple monument of love of "Mary of the Le'," that rose by their side, had often brought the tears to Helen's eyes; but Mary of the Lee was now forgotten. "There is a time and a place for all things" but love, whose rule is general over the flowery lee and the green grave, the mid-day hour and the dreary key-stone of night's black arch.

"What kept ye, sweet Helen, love?" whispered Kirkpatrick in her ear, as she lay entranced in love's dream on his bosom.

"By that question, good Adam," answered she, according to the mode of familiar address of her day, "there hangs a secret that oppresses your Helen, and drinks up all the joys of our affection."

"Speak it forth, my gentle Helen," said Fleming, "What is it? The secrecy of our meeting? I have been meditating a resolution to address your father, and this will confirm me. He can have no objections to my suit, save that I am a friend of the Johnstones and an open warrior; while your cousin, whom you rejected before you saw me, is a concealed mosstrooper and a secret manslayer."

"There, there," muttered Helen, with trembling emotion—"there, Adam, you have hit the bleeding part of my heart. I did not say to you that I had rejected Blacket House before I saw you; but you were entitled to make that supposition, because I told you that I never received his love; but, alas! Adam, there is a distinction there; and, small as it may seem, its effects may be great upon the fortunes and happiness of your Helen. It is true I have never received his love; but it is equally true that his love, having overgrown the thought of a possibility of rejection, has overlooked my negative indications, and put down my silence for consent. Yes, Adam, yes—even now Blacket House thinks I love him; and, oh! the full responsibility of my apathy rises before me like a threatening giant; my father and my mother have, I fear, taken for granted that I am to become the wedded wife of my cousin."

"Helen, this does indeed surprise me," replied Kirkpatrick, thoughtfully and sorrowfully. "I thought I had a sufficient objection to overcome on the part of your father, when I had to conquer the prejudices of clanship, and soothe his fears of my ardent spirit for the foray. But this changes all, and my difficulties are increased from the height of Kirconnel Lee to the towering Criffel." And he sat silent for a time, and mused thoughtfully. "But why, my love," he continued, "have you allowed this dangerous delusion to rest so long undisturbed, that it has become a conviction that may only be removed with danger to us all?"

"Ask me not, Adam," replied she with a full heart, "what I cannot explain. While the tongue of Blacket House's friendship was changing to love, I, whose thoughts were otherwise directed, perceived not the change; and when the truth appeared to me, my love for my father and mother, against the placid stream of whose life I have ever trembled to throw the smallest pebble of a daughter's disobedience, prevented me, day by day, from making the avowal that I could not love their choice. The difficulty increased with the hour; and, ah! my love for you crowned it at last with impossibility."

"That should rather have removed the difficulty," answered he. "Explain, sweet Helen. You are dealing in shadowy parables."

"Think you so, Adam?" said she, sighing. "Ah, then, is man's love different from woman's! The one can look an obstacle in the face; the other turns from it with terror, and flees. See you not that, by telling my parents I could not love Blacket House, I would have been conjuring up a bad angel to cross, with his black wing, the secret, but sweet path of our affection. The very possibility of being separated from you—too dear, Adam, as you are to this beating heart—made me tremble at the articulation of that charmed word which contains all my happiness on earth. You have stolen my heart from my father and mother, my sweet woods and bowers, my bright moon and Kirtle; and think you what it would be for me to lose him in whom all is centred!"

"Ah! Helen, Helen, this is unlike the majesty of that mind that roved the blue fields of the heavens, and searched the hidden springs of the love that reigns through all created things. That such thoughts should be allied to that weakness which increases inevitable danger by flying from it, I could not have supposed to be exemplified by my maid of Kirconnel. Yet is that trembling fear not a greater proof of my Helen's love than an outspoken rejection of twenty rival suitors? It is—I feel it is; and who will chide a fault of earth that hangs by a virtue of heaven? Dear, devoted, cherished object of my first passion, what has the simple heir of Kirkpatrick to give in exchange for the devotion of such a being?"

And the impassioned youth pressed her closer and closer to his breast, while he spread over her shoulders the falling cloak to shield her from the autumn dews.

They sat for some time silent—the difficulty of their situation being for a brief period forgotten and lost in the tumult of the rising feelings of a strong mutual passion.

"But this must not be allowed to continue," again said Kirkpatrick. "It is *necessary*, Helen, that you do this duty to yourself, to Blacket House, your parents, and to me. Call up the necessary fortitude, my love. Tell your mother that you cannot love Blacket House. I know the pain it will produce to you and to them; but, alas! there are many positions in this world where we can only get to the object of our desires through painful means. Pain is, indeed, the price of most of our pleasures; and, when we do not pay that price, we become bankrupt in our best feelings, and die wretched. When the path is free, I shall come forward and claim my Helen in the face of the world. Will you, will you, love?"

And he bent his head and repeated the question in soft tones beneath the cloak that covered her head; while she, in muffled accents, replied—

"I will, I will, Adam, though I should die with the last word of the declaration."

A heavy groan at this moment fell upon their ear. Adam started hastily up; and Helen, roused from her love's dream, stood petrified with fear. They looked around them in every direction; but the proximity of the place where they had been sitting to the edge of the wood, rendered it easy for an intruder to overhear their discourse, and to escape among the trees in an instant. Helen's

fears again fell on Blacket House, and she whispered to Adam what she had observed previous to her leaving the house. He conceived them to be well-founded; and, as the thought of the man who could kill his enemies in disguise, and deny the deed, flashed upon his mind, he felt for his sword, and then smiled at the precipitude of his defensive precaution. It was necessary, however, that Helen should now hurry home; and, surmounting the turf-dike of the burying-ground, they, with rapid steps, made for Kirconnel House, at a little distance from which they parted with a close embrace. Helen stood for a moment, and looked after her lover; then, wrapping her cloak round her head, she moved quickly round the edge of the enclosed lawn, and was on the eve of running forward to the wicket, when Blacket House stood before her. He looked for a moment sternly at her, spoke not a word, and then dashed away into the wood. Terrified still more, Helen hurried away, and got into the house and her own chamber before the full extent of her danger opened, with all its probable consequences, upon her mind. Having undressed herself, she retired to her couch, and meditated on the extraordinary position in which she was now placed. She had now been discovered by Blacket House, who, no doubt, knew well that she had that night had a secret meeting with Kirkpatrick—a partisan of his antagonists, the Johnstones. The discovery of a rival had come on him with the discovery of a delusion under which he had sighed, and dreamed, and hoped for years. It was probable, nay, certain, then, that the communication she intended to make to her father and mother, that she could not love Blacket House, would be received along with the elucidating commentary, that the lover now despised had discovered her love intercourse with the heir of Kirkpatrick. She would, therefore, get no credit for her statement that she never loved her cousin; but would be set down as a breaker of pledges, and one who traitorously amused herself with the broken hopes of her unfortunate lovers. Whether she made the communication or not, it would be made by Blacket House, whose fear of losing the object of his affections, or his revenge—whichever of the two moved him—would force him to the immediate disclosure. The serenity of the domestic peace and happiness of Kirconnel House would be clouded for the first time, and that by the disobedience of one who had heretofore been held to contribute, in no small degree, to that which she was to be the means of destroying, perhaps for ever. The contrast between the confidence, the hope, and the affection with which she had been, by her parents, contemplated, and fondly cherished, during all the bygone part of her life, and the new-discovered treachery into which her secret love for a stranger would be construed, was a thought she could scarcely bear. These and a thousand other things passed through her thoughts with a rapidity which did not lessen the burning pain of their impress upon her mind; and the repetition of a thousand reflections, fears, and hopes, produced in the end a confusion that terrified sleep from her pillow, and consigned her to the powers of anguish for the remainder of the night and morning.

She rose with a burning cheek and a high fluttering pulse, produced by the fever of mind under which she still laboured. She opened the casement to let in the cool breeze of morning to brace her nerves, and enable her to stand an interview with her father and mother, who might already (for Blacket House was at Kirconnel at all hours) be in possession of the secret of what they conceived to be their once loved Helen's disobedience and treachery. Her own communication, which she had pledged herself to Kirkpatrick to make, was now invested with treble terrors; and though she felt that her safety and happiness depended upon an open declaration, she felt herself totally unable to make it. Trembling and irresolute, she approached the parlour where her father and mother, along with herself, were in the habit of taking their morning meal. They were there; and there was another there—it was Blacket House. He looked at her as she entered, with a calm, but mysterious eye, which fluttered her nerves again, and forced her to stand for a moment in the middle of the apartment, irresolute whether to go forward or retreat. She fearfully threw her eye over the faces of her parents. There was no change there; the ordinary placidity of their wonted manner, and the kindly love-greeting borne in their mellow voices, startled her—so strong had been her conviction that all was disclosed. Her parents were destitute of guile; and an instant's thought satisfied her that they were still in their ignorance of the secret. But Blacket House continued his dark gaze in silence; and even this—a decided alteration in his manner—was unnoticed by the unsuspecting couple, who threw their fond eyes on their loving daughter as their only remaining pride and solace. What meant this? The new turn taken by the stream of her difficulty and danger surprised and confused her; but, calming by the influence of her parents' kindness, she sat down and went through the forms of the morning meal without exhibiting a discomposure that might attract the notice of these loving beings, who searched her face only for the indications of health and the beams of her pleasure. Her comparative composure enabled her to collect her thoughts; and she thought she now discovered a reason for this seeming forbearance or discretion of Blacket House—a man little formed for these or any other virtues: he intended to *sell* his knowledge at the price of a hand that never could be his but by this or some other mean of compulsion. The moment this thought—and, under all the circumstances, it was a reasonable one—entered her mind, she trembled at the power of the dark-eyed silent being who sat there and gazed upon her in revengeful triumph. For relief, she turned her eyes to her parents; yet she saw there the smile that approved his suit, and the confidence that would believe his declaration. Her own Kirkpatrick was absent; and she dared not meet him to receive the assistance of his advice, to enable her to support herself under her trial, or devise a plan suited to the changed circumstances, for her relief. She hurried over her meal, and hastened again to her apartment, to confirm herself in the opinion she had formed of Blacket House's intentions. Every thought tended to add to her conviction that she was correct, and told her that he never would succeed in his scheme. He would now, for certain, endeavour to see her alone, and lay before her the danger into which she had plunged herself, and the bargain by which she would be relieved from it. But she would defeat him; she would renounce her walks in the woods, desert for a time her bowers and bid adieu to her silver Kirtle. She would keep her apartment under a pretence of slight indisposition—far from an untruth—and, in the meantime, try to devise some mode of relief from her painful situation.

But the solicitude of her parents interfered, in some degree, with these plans. They discovered that she was not so ill as to be unable to seek what might do her service—her former walks and amusements around Kirconnel Lee and thus was she obliged to yield to kindness; yet she contrived to have her parents near her, so as to deprive Blacket House of an opportunity of communicating to her his imputed plan of enforcing his suit As yet, his silence had been continued; her parents were still in ignorance; and it was only (so she argued) because he had not hitherto found her alone, that his dreaded communication had not as yet been made. On the occasion of her first walk, however, she, by some untoward chance, was left in one of the arbours alone, and the opportunity (the first

that had occured) was seized by him—Blacket House was again before her, and all her fears were in a moment roused. Their eyes met with an intelligence they had never before possessed. Every passing thought seemed to be mutually read, while a few words of ordinary import seemed to be only as a preparation to his expected statement. Helen did not dare to leave him; she feared to rouse his anger, and yet she wanted courage to reply with ordinary pertinence to his remarks. His eye was constantly fixed on her, and the few words he uttered came with difficulty and pain; yet was there not the slightest allusion to the secret he undoubtedly held locked up in his breast. Was he not to bring forward his threat of exposing her, as a wrenching instrument, to force from her a consent that he was satisfied would never be given voluntarily? There was no indication of any such issue. What could be the true meaning of this dark-minded man's conduct? Again he had disappointed her fearful anticipations. He had not told her parents; he was not to tell herself. What then was he to do? She could not answer her self-put question; and her surprise when he parted from her, after a short conversation conducted with difficulty, with his secret unapproached, and the mysterious stare of his illegible eye, was not less than her terror of her anticipated issue when she first encountered him.

This new extraordinary element in the subject of her meditations and fears, disarranged all her ideas, and sent her thoughts in new channels for a discovery of what might be the secret plans of her cousin. She sighed for an interview with her lover; but that, she was satisfied, would be attended with great danger; and thus reduced to her own resources, she passed the night following her meeting with Blacket House in still increasing pain and difficulty. In the morning she was visited in her own chamber by her mother, who had, from the serious aspect of her countenance, something of great importance to communicate.

"Helen," began the good matron, "though your father and I have seldom broached the subject of love and marriage in your presence, we have, with heartfelt satisfaction, observed and understood that the man who alone has our consent to win your virgin heart is your own choice. Your wooing has lasted so long that the very birds in the woods are familiar with your persons and converse; and surely this is not to last always. You are twenty years old, my dear Helen, at the next Beltane, the first of May; and I know that it is Blacket House's wish that your happiness may be crowned by a union within as short a period as we will agree to fix. I have broken the matter to you, my love; and as I am well acquainted with the fluttering of Love's wings when Hymen enters the bower, I will not urge ye to fix a day at present, but leave you to the pleasant meditations my communication cannot but call forth. I shall send your breakfast to your bedroom this morning, my love; but I hope we may walk in the afternoon. Say nothing, Helen. Adieu! adieu!"

And the mother left the room rapidly, as if to avoid noticing the blushes of the supposed happy damsel. Helen heard the words uttered, as one may be supposed to feel the syllables of a condemnation falling upon the heart. It was well that her mother departed so rapidly, for the agitation the kind parent attributed to joy was but the prelude to a faint which retained her cold and struggling in its relentless arms for a considerable period. The first indications of consciousness, were, if possible, more terrible than the last thoughts that frightened it away. For a long period she sat upon the couch where she had heard the dreadful intelligence, and, passing her hand over her brow, tried to collect her thoughts, so as to be able to contemplate the full extent of her evil. She thought she could now see some connexion between the announcement made by her mother, and the extraordinary and mysterious conduct of Blacket House, though she was satisfied that neither of her parents possessed any knowledge of her intercourse with Kirkpatrick. The scheme of the early marriage might originate in the fears of her cousin, while his secrecy was only still maintained, till he found that she would not yield to her parents' authority, when would be the time for using his threat of disclosure to Helen, to compel her consent. All this reasoning seemed founded in existing circumstances and appearances; but so confused were her thoughts, and so painful every effort of her mind to acquire clearer views, that she felt inclined to renounce reasoning on a subject that seemed at every turn to defeat all her efforts to come to the real truth. Her misery was at least certain; for now, while the absolute necessity of a disclosure of her secret love became more peremptory and inevitable, the circumstances under which it would be made were such as would add to the unhappiness of her parents, and to the apparent deceit and treachery of her own nature, which was, notwithstanding, incapable of guile.

Meanwhile, the effects of so much mental anguish acting upon a tender frame, became soon apparent in her pale countenance and swollen eyes. She would not leave her apartment; and when her mother again visited her, she saw a change on her daughter very different from that which accompanies the character of a bride in prospective. The circumstance surprised the old lady; but still so satisfied was she that there could exist no objection to a lover whom she had (as was thought) cherished for years, that it never occurred to her that the change in her daughter was attributable to the announcement she had made to her; while Helen herself, oppressed with the secret which she struggled (as yet in vain) to divulge, shunned a subject which she found herself unable to treat in that way which would insure to her relief from her sorrow. Every effort was made to get her out into the woods, where her former scenes might enliven her mind and bring back her wonted spirits, which, chiming the musical bells of youth's happy glee, used to charm the age-stricken hearts of her parents. But these scenes had lost their power over her. The secrets Blacket House had to divulge still lay like an unholy spirit upon her heart, killed its energies, and rendered her miserable. She expected the additional source of sorrow of his society, in these forced walks, and her grief was mixed with surprise at his absence. He was often at the house, but he avoided her. She even saw him turn into a by-path, to get out of the way in which she walked—a circumstance as inexplicable as any of the prior difficulties with which the whole affair was beset on every side. She continued her meditations, called up repeated energies to nerve her for her disclosure, and, with many a sigh, felt them die away, and the tongue cleave to her mouth, as the unavailing effort shook her frame.

She had been in the habit of meeting Kirkpatrick at regular intervals; but two of the stated periods had passed without an interview: the third was approaching; and she trembled as the necessity of throwing herself on his bosom and seeking counsel in her difficulty, appeared to her in such a form as to shake her resolution not to encounter a second night-meeting with her cousin. On the morning of that evening when she must repair to the burying-ground, or lose the chance of meeting Kirkpatrick for a considerable time, it was announced to her parents, in her presence, at the table of the morning meal, that Blacket House had, on the previous day, gone on a visit to a relation in a very distant part of the country, and that he would not return for eight days. She heard it, and her eyes were involuntarily turned up to Heaven in thanksgiving for the opportunity she now enjoyed of sobbing out her sorrows on the bosom of her Kirkpatrick, and getting good counsel in her distress. She said nothing when the

announcement was made, and heard, without heeding, the remarks of her parents. Her thoughts were in Death's Mailing, and the pallid hue of her cheek gave place, for a moment, to the flush that followed the fancied touch of his lips, and the pressure that brought her nearer to the bosom where lay all the relief she now had in this world. She sought more freely than she had done for some time her old retreats, and again the song of the merle had some music for her ear—so ready is the oppressed soul to seek its accustomed pleasures that it will clutch them in the interval of a suspended grief, though sure to return. Her cousin was gone for a time. He could not cross in these paths of the wood; and, oh, happy thought! she would lie on the bosom of her Kirkpatrick, and breathe forth, uninterrupted, love's sweet tale, rendered sweeter and dearer by the grief with which it was shaded.

The evening fell that night beautiful and serene. No vapour clouded the "silver sheen," and no breath of wind rustled a leaf on the trees. "Hail to ye, bright queen!" ejaculated Helen, as she folded her mantle round her, and was on the eve of seeking the wood. "Once more light me to my lover, if, after this meeting, you should for ever hide your face among the curtains of heaven." And, breathing quick with the rising expectation of being enclosed in his arms, she issued from the house and sought the well-known loaning that led to the burying-ground. Her grief had sunk for a time amidst the swelling impulses of her passion, and it was not till she had been pressed to his bosom, her brow kissed by his burning lips, and deep-drawn sighs exhausted the ardour of a first embrace after so long a separation, that one single thought of the cruelty of her situation arose in her mind. They sat on the tumulus where they had sat often before. The grave-stones around them lay serene in a flood of moonlight; the soft "buller" of the wimpling Kirtle was all that disturbed the silence of the night; calmly there reposed the dead of many generations; if their lives were ended, their griefs, too, were past; and Mary of the Lé, whose grey monument reflected clearly the moon's light, was free from the anguish which, in struggling sighs, came from the bosom of her who was *yet* above the green mound. Helen told her lover all the extraordinary circumstances of her situation. She wept at every turn of a new difficulty, and Adam's eyes were also suffused with tears. He pressed her again to his breast, and bade her be of better heart, for that better days were coming on the wings of time.

"I confess," he said, "my dear love, that I am unable to understand the conduct of that dark-minded man; but what can he do if my Helen should yet redeem her error, and make this necessary disclosure? That is alone the cure of our pain. O Helen! what a load of evil might have been averted from our heads by the exercise of a little self-command!"

"I see it, I feel it," replied she; "but there are powers higher than the resolves of mortals. I have struggled with myself till the blood was sent back in my veins, and frightened nature saved the powerless victim of grief by the mantle of unconsciousness. What, Adam, shall I do? I feel I am unequal to the task of speaking a daughter's rebellion, and a traitor's resolution."

"When everything is explained, Helen," replied the other, "the treachery disappears, and a father and mother's love will not die under the passing cloud of a little anger. Think of our bliss, love! Did hope never bring courage to your tongue, Helen? Ah! what would that bright goddess make Adam Fleming dare!"

"And what," said she, "would Helen Bell not dare for the love she bears to her Adam, if that sacred feeling of a daughter's duty were overcome? But it must be. I shall fall upon my mother's neck, and weep out with burning tears of repentance a daughter's contrition. I will appeal to the heart of a mother and a woman. I will conjure up her own first love, move again the spring of her earliest affection, and feign to her my father lost, and her heart wrecked. Ay, Adam, hope—the hope of the possession of you—will accomplish all this. Helen has said it, and the issue will prove."

This burst of generous resolution produced a flood of tears. She crept closer to him, and the throbs of her heart were heard in the silence which reigned among the graves. A rustling sound among the trees roused her; she lifted her head, and fixed her eye on a part of the wood, on the other side of the Kirtle. For a moment she watched some movements not noticed by her lover. They rose, and Adam stood aside to get a better view of the cause of the interruption. In an instant she clung to his bosom; a loud shot reverberated through the wood; Helen fell dead—the ball destined for Kirkpatrick, having been received by the devoted maiden, who saw the hand uplifted that was to do the deed of blood. Neither scream nor audible sigh came from her; one spring when the ball entered the heart—and death!

Kirkpatrick saw at once death and the cause of it, and in an instant he gave pursuit. Springing with a bound over the Kirtle, he seized Blacket House in the act of flight. The murderer turned sword in hand, and a battle was fought in the wood, such as never was witnessed in the heat of the contest of armies. Had his opponent had twenty lives, the fury of Kirkpatrick would have been unsatiated by them all. His spirit was roused to that of a demon; a supernatural strength nerved his arm; he despised life and all its blessings; the world had in an instant lost for him any charms, but as the place where lived that one man whose blood was to glut his vengeance. His sword found the heart of Blacket House; and twenty wounds verified the ballad—

> "I lighted down my sword to draw—
> I hacked him in pieces sma'—
> I hacked him in pieces sma',
> For her sake that died for me."

He returned to the burying-ground. His Helen's body was as cold as that of those who lay beneath.

> "O Helen, fair beyond compare,
> I'll mak a garland of thy hair,
> Shall bind my heart for ever mair
> Until the day I dee."

Such is the story of Helen Bell, a subject that has employed the pen of many a poet, and brought tears to the eyes of millions. We sometimes, according to our privilege, amuse our readers with pure unadulterated fiction. Would that our task had been such on this occasion!—for we prefer the sorrow which fancy, imitating truth, rouses in the heart, to the depressing power of "owre true a tale." We may add, that the maid of Kirconnel is more frequently called Helen Irving than Helen Bell, in consequence of some doubt as to whether her mother was not really one of the Bells, and her father an Irving. After giving the matter all due consideration, and searching several authorities, we are satisfied that the truth is as we have related it. Our very ingenious friend, in a section of the "Gleanings of the Covenant," says, that the beautiful ballad, some of the lines of which we have quoted, was written on "Helen Palmer." We must have his authority.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE EXPERIMENTER.

No one who has escaped an imminent danger, can resist the impulse that compels him to look back upon it, although the recollection harrows up his soul. It is now nearly thirty years since the events of which I write occurred; still they are as indelibly impressed upon my memory as the felon's brand upon his brow. It has rarely been the fortune of those miserable beings to whose number I had a narrow escape from adding one, to retain so lively a recollection of a long train of mental anguish. Even at this lengthened period from the occurrence of the events referred to, in my solitary walks, or when sleep forsakes my pillow, they will embody themselves, and pass in vivid succession over my mind; tears unbidden fill my eyes, and my heart melts in gratitude for my deliverance from so sad a fate—carried out under the cloud of night, buried like a dog, within sea-mark, or in the boundary of two proprietors' lands—entailing disgrace upon my family, and a horror of my memory, even scaring the simple husbandman from the neighbourhood of the spot where my ashes lay.

I was the only child of an aged father, the last of a family who had, in former days, been of no small consequence in that part of the country where he resided; but before his day, the numerous acres of land his forefathers had possessed owned other lords. All he inherited was the respect of the old people, and the tradition of former grandeur. His elder brother, of a more enterprising turn of mind, at their father's death had sold off the wrecks of a long train of mismanaged property, divided the proceeds between himself and my father, and, after an affectionate adieu, set off for the West Indies. My father, less enterprising, remained where all his affections were fixed, and farmed a few acres from one of the new proprietors—void of ambition, content to glide down the stream of life unknowing and unknown by the busy world, all his cares concentrated on me, whom he intended for the church, and educated accordingly. For several years, and until misfortunes pressed so heavily upon him, he maintained me at college. When his means failed, I returned to my disconsolate parents, to consult how I should now proceed—whether to go out to Jamaica to my uncle, or commence teacher. My father had applied to his brother for aid in his difficulties, and been refused. The fears of my mother, and the wounded pride of my father, determined my fate—I commenced teacher, and succeeded equal to my ambition.

My income was small; but my habits were simple and temperate, and my means supplied my wants abundantly. From the first dawnings of reason, my mind was of a studious, inquisitive turn; I thirsted after knowledge of every kind; and, while ardent in all my pursuits, I was of a joyous and hoping disposition. All was sunshine to me; even the blighting of my prospects at college affected not a mind which felt a consciousness of being able to soar to any height; a thousand projects floated through it, each of which, for a season, seemed sufficient to rear me to the pinnacle of fortune and fame. Thus had I dreamed on for three years. One of my many objects of study engrossed the greater portion of my thoughts—the mysterious tie that united soul and body. Could I untie this Gordian knot—and I was vain enough to hope I might—then would I rank amongst earth's brightest ornaments, and fill a niche with Newton and Bacon. This extraordinary subject had even when at school, engaged the greater part of my thoughts. Often have I left my fellows at play, and stolen to some distant part of the churchyard, to muse and commune with myself, not without a boyish hope that some kind tenant of the tomb would reveal to me his mighty secret. Void of fear, I have implored the presence of spirits under the cloud of night. The feeling that filled my mind was an enthusiasm, which, though years and changes have rolled over my head, is still remembered with a sensation of pleasure.

I had kept my school for three years, to the satisfaction of the parents of my pupils and my own. My cup of enjoyment was full to overflowing. I had proceeded so far with several works of science; every one of which, ere I began, was to establish my fame, but each was quickly abandoned for some new idea. I had resumed again the first object of my inquiry, and was busily arranging materials for effecting the glorious discovery, when I was seized by an epidemic fever that was committing fearful ravages in the parish. All after this, for several weeks, is a blank in my memory, a hiatus in my consciousness. Contrary to the expectations of all that attended, I became convalescent. My strength slowly returned; but my mind had undergone a complete change: its buoyancy had fled, and no longer, like a butterfly, fluttered from one flower of fancy to another; it was fixed on the one engrossing object; yet I was conscious that the faculties of which I had once felt so proud, were now weak as those of an infant; and, dreamy and listless, I began to wander into the fields. My school had broken up. The greater part of my pupils were with a successful competitor who now supplied my place. This deepened my gloom; and I often returned with a feeling that my task on earth was accomplished—that all that remained for me was to die—that I was a cumberer of the earth. I never complained, but bore all in silence. I cared not for myself; but when I looked to my parents, I resolved to struggle on; and did struggle manfully. I felt as a drowning man, who sees an object almost within his reach, that, were he enabled to grasp it, would secure his safety. He struggles and plunges towards it in vain, every succeeding effort only serving to diminish his hopes of escape, while, by allowing himself to sink in the stream, he would cease to suffer in a moment. To the eye of a casual observer, I had regained my wonted health, neither was there any strong indication of the change that had come over my feelings; yet to speak or act was painful to me, and I could not endure to be looked at with more than a passing glance—shrinking like a criminal, and fearing lest the thoughts that were passing in my mind might be discovered.

A strange sensation had, for some time, taken possession of me. I felt as if in a false position, by some means or other, to me inscrutable—that I had, at some former period, of existence, either on this earth or some other planet, lived, acted, and witnessed, as I was now doing. Nothing appeared new to me: every incident of unwonted occurrence produced a dreamy effect of memory, as if I had experienced it before. This frame of mind was more annoy-

ing than painful, for I even at times felt a faint pleasure in it, and strove to anticipate events that were lodged in the womb of futurity: but my efforts were vain; I could not penetrate the mist; I could only recognise the objects as it cleared away.

At this time I was so fortunate as to procure the situation of amanuensis to a literary gentleman, who was employed upon a work of great extent, but of little interest. My labour was entirely mechanical. The confinement and the sedentary nature of my employment wrought still greater change on me; for hours I have sat, like an automaton, copying passages I felt no interest in, held only to my task by the consciousness of being no longer burthensome to my parents. An entire new train of ideas began to pass through my mind in rapid succession; some of them so fearful and horrid that I trembled for myself. I felt as if impelled to crime by some power almost irresistible, and a strange pleasure in meditating upon deeds of blood took possession of me. My favourite subject, the mysterious connection between soul and body, was again strong upon me, and I longed to witness the last agonies of a person dying by violence. It was necessary to elucidate my theory, and the desire to obtain the knowledge, increased. The crime and all its horrors never occurred to me as any thing but a great, a magnanimous action, a sacrifice of my own feelings for the benefit of mankind.

One evening my employer detained me much later than he was wont. We sat as usual—he at one side of the table, I at the other. I had, all the afternoon, been much stronger than I had for some time before, and felt more confidence in myself than I had done for several weeks. No sensation gave indication of the misery that was to fill my heart. All at once my mind was hurled, as if by a whirlwind, from its calm. My employer stooped over a book, in which he was deeply engaged—his head was towards me. I was mending my pen with a stout, ivory-handled desk-knife. The temptation came upon me, with hideous force, to plunge the knife into his head, and obtain the great object I so long had desired. In this fearful moment I even reasoned—if I dare use the often-abused term—that the wound would be small, and hidden by the hair, so that no man could ever know, far less blame me for the act. I grasped the knife firmly in my hand, changing it to the best position to strike with effect. My mind felt pleased and happy. I actually exulted in the opportunity. My arm was raised to strike the unconscious victim of my madness, when he raised his head, and looked me in the face. I sank into my seat, with a faint scream, and wept like a babe. The impulse had passed away, like a hideous nightmare. I shook in every limb, and raised my eyes to heaven, imploring pardon, and sighed forth a mental prayer of thanks; while the intended victim of my madness, unconscious of the danger he had escaped, did his utmost to soothe the agitation and distress which I could not conceal. I could no longer look upon his benign and placid countenance without a shudder of horror, such as the wretch must feel who is dragged to the spot where the body of his murdered victim lies witnessing against him. I felt that he was a victim snatched from me by a merciful God—a victim I had murdered in my heart. That same night I gave up my situation, much against the desire of my kind employer, and returned to my parents' roof, the most to be pitied of living men.

For several days I never left my bed, and scarcely took my food. My mind felt, at times, quite confused; at other times, strange ideas shot transitorily through it, with the vividness of lightning; but they were only coruscations, and left no impressions. I forgot them as quickly as they arose, and sank again into gloom. My malady began gradually to assume a new turn. Phantoms began to visit me; the sages of antiquity were my guests. I hailed them, at first, with pleasure, and enjoyed their presence, but soon grew weary of the voiceless, fleeting communion. In vain I spoke to them, or put questions in the most impassioned tones. No sound ever met my ear save my own. Yet there was a strange community of sentiment—an intercourse of soul between us; for they would shoot their ideas in through my eyes—smile, or look grave—and nod assent or shake the head, as various thoughts passed through my mind. After the first visits, I ceased to use articulated language; it was a joyless communion, a languid inanity, and I felt as if my own soul was no longer a dweller in its earthly tabernacle, but held a mysterious middle state between life and death. In vain I endeavoured to exert my energies. I left my bed, and began to move about; still this new torment clung to me. I possessed a strange power. I had only to think of any event in history, and the whole was present before me, even the scenes around becoming changed to the places where the circumstances happened. I wished my memory annihilated; I strove not to think. My very endeavours called up more vividly new and strange ideas; wherever I was, the place seemed peopled by phantoms. Wherever I turned my eyes, a moving pageant of gorgeous or hideous figures, strangely real, were before me.

Oh, how I loathed my situation! Yet I complained to no one—not even to my parents; enduring all in secret, and hearing the bitter taunts of friends and acquaintances, who passed their heart-cutting remarks upon my indolence, and strange way of passing my time. To the eye of a casual observer, I was in good health, and shrunk from making known my painful and unheard-of state, lest I should be considered insane, and treated as such, by being placed in confinement—an idea that made me shudder. I often doubted my own sanity; yet I felt not like ordinary madmen. I had a consciousness that I was under some strong delusion, and what I saw could not be real; still, my visions were not the less annoying and painful. The only intervals of rest I enjoyed, was when the desire to witness the last expiring throb of a person dying by violence haunted me, which it did at times, if possible, with more overwhelming force than ever. This was the more unaccountable to me, for I am naturally of a humane and benevolent disposition; and, when not overpowered by a gust of passion, timid and averse to acts of strife and violence of any kind—shuddering and becoming faint at the sight of blood. My mental sufferings, from these conflicts between my natural turn of mind and its morbid state, became so great, that life grew a burden more than I could long endure. Still, I shrunk from self-destruction; or, more properly speaking, the thought never occurred to me; for, had it come with half the force of the others by which I was enslaved, I would have, in a moment, obeyed the impulse. I had no idea of any crime, or a wish to witness the sufferings of the individual. I felt as a patriot might feel who sacrifices all for the good of his country—immolating my own feelings at the altar of science, and deeming the realization of my dreams of vital importance to mankind, who had hitherto been unable to discover the mysterious link that bound soul and body together.

At length, the thought came into my distracted mind that I might be able to try the great experiment upon myself; and a sensation near akin to joy came over me, as I turned over the various ways in which this might be accomplished. My whole invention was at work, contriving the safest mode in which I could approach nearest, without crossing "that bourne from whence there is no return;" and I felt, for days, all the pleasures and disappointments of a projector, adapting or rejecting the various schemes by turns. Bred at a short distance from the beach, I swam well. To fasten a weight to my body, sufficient to sink me, with a knife in my hand, to cut the cord as the last

pang came upon me, and then rise to the surface, often presented itself, and was as often rejected. I might be so weak as not to rise, or, in my confusion, I might stab myself in my effort to cut the cord, and the secret would be lost. At length, I fixed upon the following mode. Unknown to my parents or any one, I prepared the little room I had occupied from childhood, and, with a feeling of pride, called my study, by carefully securing from it all access of air, as far as was in my power; then, attaching a cord to the door and window, so contrived that the slightest pull would throw them wide open, I placed a chair in the centre of the room, and a chaffer of burning charcoal by its side. With a feeling of exultation, I sat down to complete my experiment. The cords were fixed to my arms; so that, when I fell from my seat unconscious, the door and window would open, and restore animation by the access of vital air. I would thus attain my object, without exposing myself, or becoming the subject of public remark, which, at all times, was most hateful to me. I watched every mutation of feeling. For the first few minutes, I felt no change, except that the room became warmer and more agreeable. Gradually my breathing became more quick; but not in the least laboured. A gentle perspiration came upon me, accompanied by a luxurious languor, such as if I had eat a plentiful dinner, and stretched myself upon a sunny bank; an irresistible desire to sleep was stealing over me. My feelings were highly pleasing; but a stupor gradually came over me, and banished thought. My next sensation was a thrill of agony, which no words can express. It was more intense than if thousands of pointed instruments had been thrust into every muscle of my body—plucked out, and again thrust in, with the rapidity of lightning. Thrilling coruscations of vivid light flashed across my eyes. I attempted to shriek—only a faint groan escaped; my organs of voice refused to obey their office. Human nature could not continue to suffer as I suffered. Again I sank into unconsciousness, and again my agony came on me, though not so intense as before. Faint glimmerings of thought began to visit me. The first was, that the agonies of death were upon me; that I was in danger of sitting too long; and, with a convulsive effort, I attempted to throw myself from the chair, but felt I was restrained. Opening my eyes, I found them dim and visionless; a dull and benumbing sensation made me feel as if my brain was bursting my head; whether it was day or night I could not distinguish; my ears were filled with confused sounds, mixed with a hissing and booming that distracted me; I felt faint and sick, so as I never felt before or since. That I was dying, I firmly believed; and again I attempted to sink from off the chair. As consciousness returned, I found myself stretched upon my bed. Still, all was darkness and confusion. I fell into a lethargy or sleep, which lasted for hours.

When I awoke, my mother sat weeping by the side of my bed; her suppressed sob was the first sound that fell upon my ear. Never can I forget that moment!—her melting wo, as she sat stooping towards me; the anguish expressed in my father's countenance, as he stood supporting himself upon the back of her chair, his eyes bent on my face. I turned my face upon my pillow, and gave vent to a flood of tears.

Before a word had been exchanged, the surgeon to whose exertions I was indebted for my restoration to life, entered. To his inquiries after me, my mother answered that, for the last few hours, I had been in a quiet sleep, and had just moved and turned as if I had awakened; but that, agreeable to his desire, she had not spoken to me. Without answering her, he stooped over the bed to feel my pulse. I turned to him, and inquired what had happened. A mutual explanation took place. That I had attempted suicide both he and my parents believed, until, to vindicate myself, I gave them a minute account of the object I had in view in what I had done. He listened with intense interest, not unmixed with astonishment, as he gradually drew from me an account of my long train of mental anguish. I could at once perceive that he did not ridicule me, but rather sympathised with me, and blamed me much for not making my case known long before, as it was not, he hoped, beyond the reach of medicine. He told me of several cases in which he had been successful, nearly similar to my own, although not to the extent of duration and variety of change. The following, which had nearly been as fatal, and would have been as inexplicable, made the greatest impression on me.

The subject of his narrative was the wife of a near neighbour of ours, who had been dead for some years. At the time both were well stricken in age, and remarkable both for their piety and walk in life. Their family, the greater part of whom were alive, had all reached manhood, and were engaged in active duties in different parts of the country. The old couple themselves were living on the fruits of their early industry and economy, in a small solitary cottage, calmly closing the evening of a well-spent life. The first attack of the malady was sudden and severe, its approach being unperceived by any one, even by the sufferer. Both had spent the day at church, and returned, conversing with their neighbours, until they reached their own cottage, where they sat reading their Bible, or conversing on subjects derived from it, until the herd-boy brought home the cow from the common pasture. On looking up, the woman saw the cow standing and lowing at the byre door. She rose from her seat, and went to admit and attend to the welcome guest. She did not return to the house after an unusually protracted stay; and her husband, beginning to be uneasy, and fearful lest the cow might have kicked or hurt her, went to ascertain the cause of her tarrying. Struck with horror, he found her talking in a fearful strain to an imaginary second person; the cow still uncared for, and the milking-pail upside down, she standing upon the bottom, busy adjusting a halter to one of the beams, and imploring the ideal person not to go until she could get all ready to accompany him to that happy land of which he spoke, and to which he shewed her the way. Her distressed husband, rushing forward, clasped her in his arms as she was putting the noose over her head. She screamed and resisted with all her energies, calling upon the phantom to rescue her from her cruel husband. For several weeks she remained in this state, confined and strictly watched. The surgeon succeeded in subduing the disease; and when reason returned, she had no consciousness of anything that had happened during the interval; but, with a grateful heart, returned thanks to God for preservation and recovery.

My pride was wounded to observe that the surgeon thought I was insane, for he quoted the above case as a parallel to mine: this I remonstrated against; and, although I could perceive a credulous smile upon his features, I at once cheerfully agreed to put myself under his care. When he retired for the evening, I found that I was indebted for my escape from death to a strange circumstance—the death of my uncle, my father's brother, who had returned from the West Indies, some years before, with considerable wealth and a broken constitution. We had never seen him since his return. Prosperity had brought to him no pleasure, riches no enjoyment. From being one of the most joyous and liberal of lads before he left home, he had returned to his country sullen and avaricious; with all his wealth, a poorer man, in mind, than when he left it—suffering from a continued dread of poverty, and the victim of hypochondria.

"Poor John!" my father would say, "how I pity you! Your money is not your own; you are only the gatherer for some other person. You dare not enjoy a shilling; neither can you take it with you when you die." My father had

just received an intimation from a lawyer, requesting his immediate attendance in Edinburgh, where his brother had died suddenly, the evening before, to make arrangements for his funeral, and look after his effects, as he believed he had died intestate. My mother had hastened up stairs with the intelligence, and to request me to come down, when she found me seated upon the chair, with my head sunk upon my breast, as if I had been in a sound sleep. Overcome by the vapour, she sank upon the floor; the noise of her fall brought up my father, whose first task was to rush to me, give me a gentle shake, and then look in agony at me and at his wife. When he took his hand from me, I fell to the floor by the side of my mother, and the window opened as I had contrived. Uttering a cry of anguish, he seized the wife of his bosom in his arms, hurried out of the fatal room, sent the servant girl for the surgeon, and returned for me, who was lying as if dead, my eyes open and fixed, dull and void of expression. My mother soon recovered; a few neighbours came to her aid; and the surgeon was, fortunately, soon found. Their utmost efforts were, for long, to all appearance, of little avail. The surgeon had almost despaired of success; at length his patience and skill were rewarded by my returning animation. The rest is already known.

So violent was the shock my constitution had sustained, from the action of the noxious gas, that it was several weeks before I was enabled to leave my room. The skill of my surgeon was evidently operating a beneficial change upon my mind. The languor and heaviness mixed with restless anxiety, which had so long oppressed me, began to yield to the powers of his prescriptions; my hallucinations became less annoying and more distant in their attacks, until they entirely ceased, and I was restored to the full enjoyment of existence. Change of scene was his final medicine; and this I most cheerfully agreed to take, for my circumstances were now affluent, and enabled me to live or wander where I might choose. My restless mind would, at times, dwell with peculiar pleasure upon some one favoured project or other; and, fearful lest I should fall again into some new philosophical dream, I resolved to travel. With a stout horse and a heavy purse, I bade adieu to my parents for a short time, and rode out of my native valley, accompanied by Malcolm Dow, a stout lad who had been reared in the family, as my servant.

I would have gone to the Continent, and visited the banks of the Rhine, Switzerland, and Italy; but I bethought me of the delightful and romantic scenery of our own dear land, with its infinitely varied beauties; the endless pleasure I would have in viewing them, in all their bearings, from the dark frowning passes in the Highlands, where rock rises piled upon rock, and the impetuous cataract makes the stoutest eye reel in looking on it, to the wimpling stream that glides through some bosky dell, where wild flowers spangle the banks, driving some village mill, whose distant clack, mingling with the murmur of the stream and the song of birds from the woods, forms a concert so sweet to the lover of nature. Without an object further than amusement, Malcolm and I jogged on for the Falls of the Clyde. Early in the afternoon, we arrived in Lanark, where I resolved to stop for a few days; and leaving Malcolm at the inn, looking after the horses, I walked out by the West Port, to visit the Falls of Stonebyres. I descended the steep brae to the old bridge, where I sat for some time, enjoying the sweep of the river, which was considerably swollen at the time, and the falls were in great magnificence. I could hear the roar of the waters as they dashed over from fall to fall, and perceive the grey mist that rose from the abyss. As I sat absorbed in the scene, a venerable personage, evidently of the class of farmers in the neighbourhood, came to me, and, after the salutation of strangers, he seated himself upon the parapet by my side, and joined in conversation and anecdote of the scenes around. He agreed with me that Clyde was a lovely stream; but added, it was a bloody one. I felt shocked at such an epithet being applied to the object of my present admiration, and requested his reason for it.

"O sir," he said, "my reason is too good for giving it that name; it has been the grave of thousands, and will yet swallow more in its greedy bosom. My only son, the hope of my declining years, perished in its waves; and even here where we sit, before this bridge was built, a scene of heroic fortitude and resignation was exhibited to sorrowing numbers, who could render no aid—a scene indeed not surpassed in ancient or modern history."

Struck by his manner, I requested him to give me the account as he had heard it.

"You shall hear it," said he, "as I had it when a boy, from my grandfather, who was one of the sorrowing witnesses of the event. There lived, in a cottage on the banks, some distance up the stream from where we are at present, a pious and industrious man, who had a very small farm attached to the ferry, which he rented; the boat that plied across the river for the accommodation of passengers was his principal support. He was very poor, and had a numerous family—very young—to provide for by his exertions. The river was much swollen by heavy rains which had fallen for some days. It was the day of the fair at Lanark, and he rejoiced in the gains he should acquire. He was resolute and athletic, and, from long practice, knew the ferry well. The labours of the day had passed off with cheerfulness; the river had continued to rise rapidly, the evening was coming on, and the last boat-load, among whom was my grandfather, were embarked. He pushed out into the stream, and skilfully as he manœuvred his boat, the river carried them down considerably below the usual landing place. The steady boat-man, of all that were in danger, was alone collected and free from alarm. His wife, who stood on the side with an infant in her arms mingled cries and prayers with the roaring of the swollen river. At length he neared the side at an eddy, and the passengers waded to the green banks. His wife and all called to him to step out also, and haul the boat out of the stream; but they implored him in vain, for he relied too much upon his own skill and strength, and heeded them not. Two or three passengers stood on the opposite bank, wishing to cross also; and the temptation of a few more pence induced him to push again into the angry stream; after a kind assurance to his wife, and those with her, that there was no danger. Scarce had he spoke, when it was evident that he and the boat were as much the sport of the swollen Clyde, as a withered leaf. The skiff shot along like an arrow towards the fall. A wild scream arose from both sides of the river; all aid was out of human power, yet no cry for help escaped him; he sat down with calm resignation, pulled his bonnet over his eyes, and, muffling his face in his plaid, cried—'Jesus have mercy!' and, ere the sounds died away, he was swept over the tremendous fall, and perished."

The scene seemed to pass before me, as I listened to him, and gazed upon the stream. We parted, and I proceeded to view the fearfully majestic spot, where the river on my right, increasing its angry roarings, gushed over the awful rock. Descending the footpath on my right, the whole scene of terror and grandeur burst upon me. The evening was approaching apace, and slowly and reluctantly I began to ascend, after having scrambled to almost every accessible spot on the side where I was. So much did the noise and sublimity affect me, that I felt one of my unsettled fits stealing over my mind. Strange thoughts began to arise. I quickened my pace until I reached the top of the height; and the glorious view—the beautiful sloping braes of Nemplar, and the village gilded by the beams of

the setting sun—burst upon me. I again longed for a view of the magnificent fan-looking cascade from a new point; and so imperative was my desire that I never thought of the danger. Stepping to the brink of the chasm, where the fearful tumult raged many feet below, I could only catch an angular glance; and, to extend it, I caught a bush, and leaned forward upon one hand and my knees. Dreadful moment! horrid recollection!—I felt the bank giving way. A convulsive effort to regain my equilibrium, and a stifled cry for mercy, are all I recollect—my heart collapsed, and all consciousness ceased.

How long I continued in this state I have no means of ascertaining; my first sensation was a sickness that almost made me again relapse into insensibility, accompanied by a feeling of pain in all my limbs. Languidly I opened my eyes; all was dark as midnight. The roar of the waters stupified every sense. The horrors of my situation chilled my soul, and annihilated all my courage. How I retained, by the energies of despair, unaided by reason, my half pendulous position, I cannot explain. I was, for a time after consciousness returned, incapable of reflection; my mind, a chaos of fear and horror. I felt wet to the skin, from the thin spray, which fell upon and enveloped me like a cloud; a profuse sweat stood upon my forehead, and, rolling down in large drops, made my eyes smart. I grasped something that sustained me, yet I scarcely knew how. Gradually the sickness left me, and cool thoughts of my perilous situation began to occupy my mind; my energies and native desire of preservation began to strengthen. My first care was to ascertain if any of my bones were broken. My legs hung over a ledge of the rock, upon which the rest of my body lay supported by my hands, which still clung to the small object I had grasped; cautiously I moved my legs, the one after the other: no bone was broken; but I found them painful in many places. Still clinging to my hold, on which I felt my whole chance of escape from being plunged into the gulf below depended, I, for some time, and by many useless efforts, attempted to get my knees upon the ledge of rock; my position was becoming every minute more painful, and I less able to retain it; my arms were benumbed, and my hands powerless, from being so long above my head. I dared not pull myself up, for the falling of stones and earth when I first made the attempt, gave fearful note of the feeble tenure by which I was sustained. My left hand began to cramp; the fear of instant annihilation seized me; I could hold by it no longer. I grasped still more firmly by my right, and, stretching my left, found relief, by moving it gently about, to restore the circulation. I dared not bring it down, lest the other had failed; and, stretching farther than I had yet done, it touched something hard and erect; it was the stem of a stoutish bush, that grew out of a crevice in the rock. A ray of hope darted through my mind. I grasped it, still keeping my first hold, and got my knees on the ledge. To stand on my feet was now an easy effort. The joy of that movement, in the midst of my sufferings and despair, I shall never forget. I felt as if snatched from the roaring abyss. My nearly exhausted strength began to be renewed; I felt comparative comfort; yet I would have given all I possessed for my deliverance; my escape was not yet more certain, or my situation much less perilous. I found that I still held clutched in my right hand the bush that had given way, and been the cause of my disaster; but how far I had fallen, or at what part of the hideous chasm I had been mercifully arrested, I had no means to ascertain; for I stood, like a Russian peasant ready to receive the knout, with my face to the wall of rocks. I looked to the right side and to the left; all was the most impenetrable darkness. My arms, now that the weight of my body was taken from them, felt if possible more benumbed. I groped with my feet as far as I could, and found my standing very narrow, but inclining rather into than from the rock. I loosened one hand, and with an effort, that I thought would have dislocated my shoulder, brought it to my side. The tingling sensation I felt from the returning circulation, almost made me cry aloud. As I found that I still stood firm, I undid the grasp of my left hand, but not before I had turned my face from the rock. I now stood facing the raging flood; but its roaring was all I could distinguish. I now looked towards the Heavens, and thought I could perceive the stars dimly, through the thick cloud of spray in which I was involved. I leaned against the rocks, but my legs began to fail me, and trembled under the weight of my body. I was imperatively compelled, while strength remained, again to change my posture, and at length succeeded, and seated myself upon the ledge, my legs dangling over the edge.

Now, for the first time, I felt as if I were at ease, and began to calculate on the chances of my escape—feeling that my situation was so much improved that there was every reason to hope I should be able to sit out the fearful night, be once more snatched from death, and witness the dawn usher in the glorious orb of day, when I felt assured every effort would be made for my rescue. I gazed intensely down the roaring void, in hopes to see some indication that I was sought after. Malcolm I knew would strain every nerve, nay, peril his own life, to save mine. I thought I now could perceive first one dark red ball or light upon the edge of the stream, quickly moving, followed by others. The blood-red glare, as they approached, gradually became more bright, surrounded by a lighter halo; but they threw no ray where I sat, anxiously watching them. Their bearers were invisible from where I was. At length they came nearer the whirling pool, and cast a red shade on the water, where it shot over the last shelf. I could look no longer—my brain whirled, I closed my eyes, I felt as if I would have fallen, even after they were shut, with all my force. I shouted with all my might, in hopes they might hear my voice. Vain effort!—no sound less loud than the thunders of Heaven could be distinguished amid the turmoil of waters.

Again I ventured to open my eyes. The lights had disappeared. I felt, if possible, more forlorn than I had yet done; my heart began to sink; I laid myself along upon the hard rock, and, commending myself to God, became more calm and resigned to my fate. If ever there was a prayer in which true sorrow for sin, and humble confidence in the goodness and mercy of God, were poured from the human breast, it was from that fearful place. After my devotions, a calm feeling stole over my mind. I laid my head down, and, strange as it may appear, fell sound asleep as a cradled babe, and awoke refreshed. The horrors of the earlier part of the night came upon me like a fearful dream. The waters thundered in my ears. I opened my eyes, and looked up. The first rays of the sun, glancing upon the mists raised by the falls, formed numerous rainbows. I dared not to look down to the abyss, or forward to the rushing stream. With a feeling of utter helplessness, I turned my face again to the rock, and looked up. A cry of hope and thanksgiving escaped my lips—the top of the bank was only a few feet from where I lay! Rising to my knees, and holding by the bushes, I poured forth my morning prayers of thanksgiving and supplication for deliverance. I rose to my feet; the edge was only a little above my reach—my situation was still fearfully critical. Whether to risk all, and, by my own efforts, free myself, or wait until aid came, I turned over in my mind for a few minutes, as I examined the space above me. The noise of the waters, and agitation of my mind, were again beginning to render my situation more and more perilous, and I felt there was no time to lose. It was far more appalling in the glare of day than the cloud of night, and, with a desperate energy, I made

the attempt, clinging to what I could grasp. I know not how I succeeded, until I lay stretched upon the verge of the gulf, secure from danger. I dared not rise to my feet —I crept upon my hands and knees for several yards, then sprang up, nor looked behind. Unheeding the path I took, I ran until I sank exhausted, the roar of the waters no longer sounding in my ears. The sight of the place was now hateful to me. I resolved not to visit it again, or see the other falls—indeed, I was very ill, from the night's exposure to damp, and the sufferings of my mind.

Without hat or shoes, I entered the inn of the village. After raising them from their beds, my appearance was so suspicious, that it was with difficulty they allowed me to enter; but a seven-shilling piece, which I tendered to the landlady, acted as a charm in raising her good opinion of me. I obtained a warm bed, and a cordial, while she prepared breakfast, and dried my clothes, which were soiled and wet. I evaded all her artful inquiries to learn how I had come into my present situation. It looked so improbable, even to myself, that I thought no one would give credit to my relation; and the rumours upon my former escape made me resolve to keep it secret from every one, even Malcolm, to whom I wrote to come over to me with the horses.

I remained in my room until his arrival, which was not until late in the forenoon. When he arrived, I thought he would have gone distracted with joy—he wept and laughed by turns—gazing at times with a vacant stare, then touching me to prove my identity. After he became more composed, I learned that it was currently reported and believed in Lanark, that I had perished in the river. Malcolm had waited for me with extreme impatience, after nightfall, until about ten o'clock, when he could be induced by the landlord of the inn to remain no longer, and even the landlord had become uneasy. After some delay, several men were engaged, to accompany Malcolm in his search for me, and, having procured torches and a lantern, they proceeded to the side of the river, beneath the fall, and, after searching every spot they could reach in the darkness of the night, for more than a mile on each side, they again, on Malcolm's importunities, and his offer of a handsome reward, renewed their search the second time. In an eddy not far below the fall, one of them discovered my hat, sunk near the margin, and filled with water and mud. That I had been drowned none of the party had the smallest doubt. The search had continued for upwards of three hours, their torches were burned out, and the men refused to remain longer; but no persuasion could induce Malcolm to leave the side of the swollen river, where he had remained during the short interval till day; the landlord promising to return early, with drags and men, to search for my body. In this manner they had been employed, until all hope had fled, and they, accompanied by Malcolm, had returned to the inn, where he found my letter. Confused by hope and doubt, he had hurried on foot, and run to me. Moved by his affection, I gave him a sum of money, to reward the landlord and his assistants, telling him I was extremely sorry for the alarm and trouble I had put them all to; but that my hat having fallen in, and my not returning, were caused by a circumstance I did not choose to explain.

As I felt no serious inconvenience from my adventure, I rose and dressed, and left the village for Glasgow, after dinner. As we passed the Cartland Bridge, I shut my eyes, to prevent my seeing the river, and put spurs to my horse, to quit the scene where I had suffered so much in so short a time.

After wandering over the greater part of Scotland for several weeks, I became weary of enjoyment, and turned our horses' heads homewards by the coast of Ayrshire, with a view to visit the Island of Arran, and then cross the country to Stirling, by Loch Lomond. We had reached Largs, on the coast of Ayrshire, and saw the Isle of Bute, the Cumbraes, and the lofty summits of Arran, rise out of the Firth of Clyde, in beautiful succession. At this time steamboats were unknown. I agreed with the landlord of the inn to have our horses carefully sent round by Glasgow, to wait us at Dumbarton, and set out for the beach, to enjoy the scene, and agree for a boat to carry us on our aquatic excursion; but the time passed on, and evening approached when we were at a considerable distance from the town. We had been sometimes upon the beach, at others among the rocks, as fancy led. I said to Malcolm that I would now return to our inn, and cause our landlord to make arrangements for a boat. As we hurried away from the shore towards the town, four men, in seamen's apparel, rushed from behind a rock, and pinioned our arms before we were aware. Two of them held pistols in their hands, threatening to fire if we uttered a sound, and pushed us before them to the spot whence they had issued. Here we found two other similar characters; the whole were stout, athletic men, of different ages, bronzed by the weather.

The place where we were was close by the beach, under a rock which bectled out for a few feet—the sea, at full, coming almost up to the base—but protruding sufficiently to conceal, except in front, a number of people. Still pointing the pistols to our breasts, and almost touching our vests, they bound our hands together behind our backs, and, taking our handkerchiefs from our pockets, covered our faces. We were silent and passive in their hands; yet in an agony of fear. They placed us upon the hard rock, and we dared not to ask one question, to ascertain the cause of our detention. From the few words that we could pick up out of their conversation, which was carried on in whispers, I could learn that the disposal of our persons engaged them. Malcolm could contain his fears no longer, and began to plead for mercy for his master and himself. One of the fellows snapped his pistol; I could hear the click and smell the powder.

"You are in luck this bout," said a voice; "but don't make me try it again; she never flashed in the pan before. We don't threaten for naught; so bless your luck, and take warning."

A long period of fearful suspense ensued, in which my imagination conjured up a thousand objects of horror and suffering. The sea-breeze gently sighed among the rocks, and we heard the soft cadence of the gentle waves that fell near our feet, as the tide advanced. That we had become objects of alarm to a band of lawless men, whose lives were spent in violating the laws of their country, I was fully aware, but in what manner I knew not, unless that, by our sauntering about the rocks, they had suspected us to belong to the excise. In such cases I had heard that they were apt to do deeds of violence; but Malcolm's escape prevented me from speaking a word, or requesting an explanation. At length the sound of oars, pulled steadily and with caution, fell upon my ears; and a confused suppressed sound of many voices soon followed; then there was the trampling of feet through the water and upon the rock, with the noise as if numerous articles were placed close to where we sat. Shivering from cold, we sat in anxious suspense. That I had been right in my conjecture, I felt now assured; and, at this moment, I thought they were delivering their cargo. Soon the movements ceased; we were grasped by powerful hands, again threatened with death if we uttered a word, and placed in a boat, which, by the motion, seemed to glide through the water for a considerable time. No word was spoken by those in the boat, except in whispers. Again I found it touch the beach. We were lifted out, and placed upon the edge of the water, the cords cut from our wrists, and, in one moment after, the sound of the departing boat fell upon our gratified ears. We were alone, and the first use we made of our regained

liberty, was to take the mufflings from our faces. All was dark around, nor could we discern any object except the faint phosphoric light that marked the margin of the waves here and there, like golden threads, as they broke at our feet.

We now breathed more freely; our situation, though far from comfortable, was free from the dread of immediate violence; for we stood alone and solitary upon an unknown beach—but whether in Ayrshire, Bute, or Argyle, we had no means to ascertain. From our painful position while in the boat, the time had hung so heavy on us that it appeared we had sailed a great distance. Not so much as to the value of a farthing had been taken from our persons, nor any violence used, more than was necessary to keep us silent and prevent our escape. I now, indeed, think, that the pistol which was snapped at Malcolm, had only powder in the pan, to intimidate. After consulting for some time on the best means of extricating ourselves from the necessity of passing the night on the exposed beach, we agreed to proceed inland, at any risk, whether of falls or a ducking, in quest of a roof to cover us. Before we left, I groped the face of my watch—to see it was impossible, the night was so dark. I found the hands to indicate half-past ten; so we had thus been four hours in the hands of our captors.

Stumbling or falling at every few steps, we now proceeded slowly on. Malcolm, who preceded me, once or twice plunged into quagmires, through which I followed, until I was almost spent. At length, a faint light, at some distance, caught our eyes. Onwards we urged, until we could distinguish a cottage, from whose small window the light proceeded. After scrambling over a low, loose stone wall, we found ourselves in the cottage garden. I looked in at the window, and could perceive a man and two women—one old, the other young—seated by the fire. There was no other light of any kind burning; and the dull ray of the fire gave to the interior a gloomy appearance, save where it fell upon the three individuals who sat crouching before it. There being no door on the side we were on, we walked to the front, and knocked for admittance. This side of the cottage gave no indication of any light being within—the window being carefully closed. For some time we knocked in vain—no answer was made. At length, our knockings were answered by a female voice—

"What want ye here at this time o' nicht, disturbing a lone woman?"

"My good woman," I replied, "we are strangers, who know not where we are. Be so kind as open the door to us."

"Gae 'wa—gae 'wa; I will do nae sic thing; I hae nae uppitting for ye."

"My good woman," said I, in the most soothing manner I could, "do, for charity, open the door. We are like to perish from fatigue, and can proceed no further. You shall be paid whatever you ask for any accommodation you can afford, were it only to sit by your fire until daybreak."

After some time spent in entreaties, the door was cautiously opened by a female, who held a small lamp in her hand, and we were ushered into a small apartment—not the same we had seen, but a dark and uncomfortable place. She appeared to be greatly alarmed, and requested us not to make any noise, or to speak loud, whatever we heard, or we might bring her into danger for her humanity, and ourselves into greater hazard. We would, she added, have ourselves alone to blame for any evil that might follow. Taking the lamp with her, she retired, saying she would bring us refreshments in a few minutes. We now regretted being admitted into this mysterious shelter; yet the looks of the woman—the younger of the two we had seen from the back of the house—were soft and sweet, rather inclining to melancholy. We had no time to communicate our suspicions before her return. She set before us a bottle, containing some brandy; a jug of water; and a sufficient quantity of bread and cheese; and urged us to make haste and retire to bed. Having filled a glass of the liquor, she gave it to Malcolm. He he drank off at once, with great pleasure. My eyes were upon her. I saw a shade of anxiety on her countenance, succeeded by a look of satisfaction, when he returned the empty glass. I cannot account for it; but a suspicion came upon me that there was more in the giving of the liquor than courtesy; and I resolved not to taste it. She filled out the same quantity for me; but I declined it. Her look changed; she became embarrassed; and she requested me to take it, as it was to do me good. There was a something in the tone of her voice, and a benignity in her manner, that almost did away with my suspicions. I took the glass in my hand; and, requesting her to fill a cup of water for me, lifted the glass to my head. While she poured the water, I emptied the liquor into the bosom of my vest, placed, by the same movement, the glass to my mouth, and, returning it to her, drank off the water. She immediately retired; saying, with a smile, in which there was much of good nature—

"I am sorry for your poor accommodation. Good night!"

I now began to reflect upon my situation. Fear predominated. I had been led into it I scarce knew how. I blamed myself for entering; yet I was not aware of what was to take place in it. We were, unarmed and fatigued, on a part of the coast I knew not where. I looked to my watch; it wanted a few minutes of twelve; we had not been one quarter of an hour under the roof. I looked at Malcolm, by the feeble light of the lamp, wondering why he neither moved nor spoke. He was in a dead sleep, leaning upon his high-backed wooden chair. I attempted to rouse him, in vain, by shaking him. That the brandy had been drugged, I was now convinced. My heart sank within me. I glanced round, for means to escape, and procure help to rescue my faithful servant; but there was neither window nor fireplace in the small place in which we were. I placed my hand upon the door, to rush into the other apartment; but the recollection of the man I had seen—the suspicion that there might be more in the house—and the girl's warning—detained me. As I stood, sweating with agony, I heard voices in conversation in the other apartment.

"Mary," said the old woman, "ye are owre soft-hearted for the trade we are engaged in. Ye will, some time or ither, rue yer failing."

"Mither," was the reply, "I may rue it, but ne'er repent it. I couldna, for the life o' me, keep twa human creatures pleading for shelter, wha kendna whar to gang, in a mirk nicht like this. Did I do wrang, Jamie?"

"I fear you have, Mary," said the man. "If Captain Bately finds them here when he arrives—he is such a devil!—I know not what he may do to them; he is so jealous and fearful of informers; and, this trip, he has a rich cargo for the Glasgow merchants."

"I'm no feared, if ye dinna inform yersel," said the daughter; "for I hae given them baith a dram o' the Dutchman's bottle that will keep them quiet aneugh, or I'm sair cheated; for it's nae weaker for me."

At this period of the conversation, I heard the tramp of horses' feet and the voices of several men approaching the house. The door was opened without knocking, and several men entered. One of them demanded if all was right.

"Sae far as I hae heard, captain," said the old woman.

"So far good, old mother," replied he. "James, have you seen our agent from Glasgow?—how goes it there?"

"All right, captain," said James

"I will then make a good run of it,' rejoined the other. "But I was nearly making a bad one. Two of these land-sharks were watching our motions under the rocks; fortunately, they were observed, and put out of the way in time. All had been up with me this trip, had they got back to Largs before we were cleared. Come, lads, bait your horses quickly; we have a long way through the muirs ere dawn."

He was interrupted by the scraping and furious barking of a dog at the door where I stood listening. My heart leaped as if it would burst, my temples throbbed, and my ears rung; yet my presence of mind did not forsake me. Imitating Malcolm, I placed myself in my chair, and feigned myself dead asleep.

So many voices spoke at once that I could not make out a word that was said, except imprecations and entreaties. The lamp still burned upon the table before me. The door opened, and the captain entered, accompanied by several others.

"Dear captain," said Mary, "they are not informers—they are strangers, and fast asleep. Harm them not, for mercy's sake!"

"Silly wench!" replied the captain. "Peace!—I say, peace! These are the same rascals who were watching us this whole afternoon. How the devil came they here, if they have not some knowledge of our proceedings? Look to your arms, my lads! We will shew them they have caught a Tartar." I heard one pistol cocked, then another. How I restrained myself from shewing my agitation I know not; I was nearly fainting.

"Captain," cried Mary, "you shall not harm them, or you must do to me as you do to them. You are as safe as ye were before I let them in. Do ye no see they are dead asleep?—try them, and believe me for aince, like a good fellow."

"I don't wish to do more than is necessary for my own safety," said he; "perhaps they are not what I take them for; but fellows will talk of what they see. Taking Malcolm by the shoulder, he gave him a shake, as I saw through between my eyelids, nearly closed. "Fellow," he cried, "who are you?" Malcolm neither heard nor felt him; so powerful had the opiate been. He passed the lamp before his eyes, and made a blow at his head with the but-end of his pistol. Malcolm moved not a muscle of his face. He was satisfied. After passing the lamp so close before my eyes that one of my eyebrows was nearly singed by the flame, he set it slowly upon the table, and I felt the muzzle of the pistol touch my temple. I moved not a muscle of my face. It was withdrawn, and I heard him pace the room for a moment, muttering curses at the young woman, who endeavoured to soothe his rage. No other person spoke. He paused at length, and, lifting the lamp, held it again to my face.

"I am satisfied—all is right," said he; "but, if you dare again, Mary, to do the same, you and your mother may go hang for me—that's all. Come, boys, be moving—we lose time." In a few minutes afterwards, I heard the sound of their horses' feet leaving the house. My lungs recovered their elasticity; I breathed more freely. Mary entered, and, lifting the lamp to remove it, looked upon us in tears. I would have spoken, but refrained, lest I had given farther alarm and uneasiness to one so kind and humane. She looked upon us, smiling through her tears.

"Poor men!" she said, "yer hearts were at ease when mine, for your sake and my ain, was like to break; yet, I dinna think he wad killed ye, devil as he is, if ye didna fight wi' him; but he wad carried ye awa to Holland, or France; and then what wad yer puir wives, if ye hae them, hae suffered, no kenning what had come owre ye? Oh, that I could but get free o' them, and Jamie gie up this way o' life!' (A heavy sigh followed.) "But ye are sleeping sound and sweet, when I am sleepless. O Jamie, will ye no leave thae night adventures, and be content wi' wnat ye can earn through the day?" She gently shut the door as she retired, and all became still as death. With a feeling of security I laid myself upon the bed, and soon fell into a profound sleep. It was late in the morning ere I awoke. Malcolm was awake; his movements had roused me He was still confused from the effects of the opiate, and was gazing wildly around the apartment. After taking a heavy draught of the water, he became quite collected. I rose, and we entered the larger part of the cottage, where the mother and daughter were busy preparing breakfast. After the usual salutations, and an apology for the badness of our lodging, I inquired how far we were from Largs, and was informed it was about three miles from where we were. Feeling myself much indisposed, and threatened with a severe cold, I resolved to return home as direct as I could, not choosing to run the risk of any more such adventures. I dispatched Malcolm to the inn, to prevent the horses being sent off to Dumbarton, and to bring them as quick as possible to where I now was. During his stay, I became more and more interested in the gentle Mary. She was not in the least embarrassed, as she thought that I was unconscious of what had passed through the night. I felt it would be a cruel return for her kindness to mention it, and alarm her fears for her lover, for such I supposed him to be. I could have gained no object by doing so. already knew, from what I had heard, that she was connected with a band of smugglers, whose calling she loathed.

There was a firmness of purpose, mixed with her gentleness, displayed during the time the band and their captain were in the house, which shewed I could gain no information as to them, from her; neither did I feel any anxiety to know more than I did, or ever to be in their company again. Had I had the wish to give information of the lawless band I could only inform as to the females; the others had managed so well I could not have identified one of them.

At length my horses arrived, and I prepared to depart. As I took my leave, I put five guineas into the hand of Mary. She looked at the sum, then at me, and refused to accept any remuneration for our shelter.

"Keep it," said I, "to enable you to induce James to quit his dangerous trade." She blushed, trembled, and then became pale as death. My heart smote me for what I had said. She gave me such an anxious, imploring look, as her trembling lips murmured—

"Oh, what shall I do?"

"Fear nothing, Mary, from me; I owe you much more for your goodness of heart. If you and James will come to reside near Allan Gow, he shall do all in his power to assist you." Amidst blessings from the mother, and the silent gratitude of the daughter, I rode off, on my way to Glasgow, and on the following day was under my parents' roof.

It is now many years since then. James and Mary are settled in the neighbourhood, and prosperous. Malcolm is still with me; but whether servant or companion, I can scarce tell at times. When my strange imaginations come upon me—for I have never been, for any length of time free from them—he is almost master of my small establishment.

WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE GHOST OF HOWDYCRAIGS.

"*They* gather round, and wonder at the tale
Of horrid apparition tall and ghastly."

BLAIR.

AFTER all that has been written, printed, and circulated in the way of "Statistical Accounts," "Topographical Descriptions," "Guides to Picturesque Scenery," &c. &c., there are still large tracts of country in Scotland of which comparatively little is known. While certain districts have risen, all at once, into notoriety, and occupied for a time the efforts of the press and the attention of the public, there are others, perhaps little inferior to them in point of scenery, through which no traveller has passed, no writer drawn his pen, and upon which no printer has inked his types. Among other neglected regions, the Ochil Hills may be mentioned—at least the eastern part of them. These, so far as we know, have not been fruitful of battles, and, consequently, the historian has had nothing to say concerning them. They are traversed by few roads—the few that do exist are nearly impassable, except to pedestrians of a daring disposition; and the novelist, never having seen them, has not thought of making them the home of his imaginary heroes. They have given birth to no poet of eminence—none such has condescended to celebrate them in his songs; and, except to the few scattered inhabitants who nestle in their hollows, they are nearly unknown.

This, however, is not the fault of the hills themselves, but of the circumstances just alluded to; for here heroes might have found a field on which to spill whole seas of blood; novelists might have found all the variations of hill, valley, rock, and stream, with which they usually ornament their pages; and Ossian himself, had it been his fortune to travel in the district, might have found "grey mist" and "brown heath" to his heart's content; and, in the proper season, as much snow as would have served to deck out at least half-a-dozen "Morvens" in their winter coat. These hills, on the east and south, rise from the adjoining country by a gradual slope, surmounted in some instances by thriving plantations, while, in others, the plough and harrow have reached what appears to be their summit. On the north they are terminated by a rocky front, which runs nearly parallel to the river Tay, and afterwards to the Earn, thus forming the southern boundary of Strathearn, which is perhaps one of the most fertile districts in Scotland. The elevation, on this side, is partly composed of the rocky front just mentioned; partly of a cultivated slope at its base; and partly of a green acclivity above; which, when seen from the plain below, seems to crown the whole, while it conceals from the eye those barren altitudes and dreary regions which lie behind. But, after having surmounted this barrier, the prospect which then opens may be regarded as a miniature-picture of those more lofty mountain ranges which are to be found in other parts of the island. Here the ground again declines a little, forming a sort of shoulder upon the ascent, as if the Great Architect of nature had intended thereby to secure the foundation of the superstructure which he was about to rear above. It then rises into frowning eminences, on which nothing seems to vegetate, except coarse heath; a few stunted whin-bushes; and, here and there, an *astrogalus*; a *lotus carniculatus*; or a white *orchus*. These, however with the exception of the first, are too scanty to produce any effect upon the colouring of the landscape; and the whole looks withered, brown, and, in some instances, even black, in the distance. But, on passing these barren altitudes, or on penetrating one of the gorges by which the central district communicates with the country around, and of which there are several, the eye is saluted with extensive tracts of plantation—some composed of the light green larch; others of the sombre-looking Scottish pine; and, where the soil is more favourable to the growth of corn, portions of cultivated land, interspersed with streams, giving a fresher green to their banks, clumps of trees standing in sheltered positions, and the isolated habitations of men.

The last of these may be said to constitute a sort of *little world*, enclosed by a mountain rampart of its own—holding little or no communication with the great world without; and, consequently, escaping all the contamination which such intercourse is supposed to imply. But, if its inhabitants had escaped the contamination, it were reasonable to infer that they had missed that stimulus which mind derives from mind, when brought into close contact; and also many of those improvements and more correct modes of thinking which almost every passing year brings forth. In such a region, children must travel far for education; and men, not unfrequently, live and die in the prejudices in which they were nursed. To conclude this imperfect sketch, it may be observed that the scenery of these hills is bleak, rather than bold, barren, rather than wild; and, though some parts of them possess a sort of dreary interest, in general they can lay no claim to that quality which has been denominated the *sublime*.

The particular district of Fifeshire in which the following incidents occurred, lies between the villages of Strathmiglo and Auchtermuchty on the south, and those of Newburgh and Abernethy on the north. From the last of these places, which is still known as the metropolis of the ancient Pictish empire, a deep and narrow gorge, called *Abernethy Glen*, stretches southward among the Ochils for more than a mile. On leaving the open fertile country below, and getting into this pass, the contrast is striking. In some places the footpath winds along the face of a bank so steep that, but for the circumstance of its being composed of earth, it might have almost been termed a precipice; and here, if the passenger should miss his footing, it would be nearly impossible for him to stop himself till he reached the bottom, in which a turbulent stream brawls and foams over rocks and stones, disturbing the silence and the solitude of the place with sounds which have a tendency to inspire feelings of superstitious fear. The scene, from its nature and situation, appears to be well suited for those transactions which, according to popular belief, "surpass Nature's law;" and it has been regarded as the favourite haunt of *witches*, *fairies*, *ghosts*, and other mysterious beings, from time immemorial. Numbers of the inhabitants of the village

below had been scared, in their nocturnal rambles, by the orgies of these uncouth neighbours; many a belated traveller had seen strange sights, and heard stranger sounds, in this haunted dell; many a luckless lad, in journeying through it, to see the mistress of his heart, had met such adventures as to drive love nearly out of his head for whole weeks to come; and even maids, upon whom the sun went down in the dangerous pass, had seen things at the mention of which they shook their heads and seemed unable to speak. Nor were there awanting instances of individuals who, in returning, at the "witching time of night," from a delightful interview, in the course of which the marriage day was settled, had been so terrified that they forgot every word of what had been said; and, when the minister and the marriage guests arrived, behold they were found in the barn or in the field, or, what was worse, they had gone upon a journey, and were not to be found at all. Those of the villagers who had not seen and heard of these unearthly doings for themselves, had been told of them by their mothers and grandmothers; and thus one generation after another went forth into the world completely armed against sceptics and unbelievers of all sorts. If any one ventured to doubt the veracity of these statements, or to call in question the cogency of the arguments by which they supported them, they had only to appeal to the testimony of their fathers and grandfathers, their mothers and grandmothers, and the most sceptical were convinced at once. No man durst venture to cast the shadow of a doubt upon such incontrovertible evidence, because to have done so would have been to implicate their relations in the charge of speaking beside the truth; and these, they said, "were decent, respectable folk, and never kenned for leers in their lives."

In this metropolis, and near the scene of these memorable events, Nelly Kilgour was born—the exact date of her birth we do not pretend to determine, though it must have been some time in the eighteenth century—and had lived running about, going to school, and serving sundry of the lieges who were indwellers thereof, till she had arrived at years of discretion—in other words, till she had seen three-and-thirty "summers," as a poet would say, and nearly the same number of winters, as the reader may guess. It has been said, that there are three distinct questions which a woman naturally puts to herself at three different periods of her life. The first is—"Who will I take?"—a most important question, no doubt; and we may reasonably suppose, that it occurs about the time when the attentions of the other sex first awaken her to a sense of her own charms, and she is thus ready to look upon every one who smiles on her as a lover, and every young fellow who contemplates her face while talking to her, as anxious to become her husband. The second question, which is scarcely less important, is—"Who will I get?" and this, we may again suppose, begins to be repeated seriously, after she has seen the same individual smile upon half-a-dozen damsels on the same day, and after she has learned that it is possible for an unmarried man to contemplate her own fair face with the deepest interest, and converse with her on the most interesting subjects on Monday morning, and then go and do the same to another on Tuesday evening. But the last, and perhaps the most important, as it certainly is the most perplexing of these questions, is—"*Will I get onybody ava?*" and this, there can be little doubt, begins to force itself upon her attention, after the smiles of her admirers have become so faint that they are no longer able to climb over the nose; when, instead of talking of love, they begin to yawn, and speak about the weather; in short, after she becomes conscious that her charms are at a discount, and that those who are coming up behind her are every day stealing away her sweethearts.

Through the whole of the previous stages Nelly Kilgour had passed; and she had now arrived at this important question, which, as has been just said, is the last a woman can put to herself. She had seen her admirers, one after another, come and look in her face, and continue their visits, their smiles, and their conversation for a season, and then go away and leave her, as if they had got nothing else to do. She had spent a considerable portion of her life, as has been already observed, in serving the lieges in and about the place of her nativity—to no purpose, as it appeared at least in so far as the getting of a husband was concerned, nothing had been effected. The proper season for securing this desideratum of the female world was fast wearing away; something, she saw, must of necessity be done; and, thinking that women, like some other commodities might sell better at a distance than at home, she engaged herself as a servant on the little farm of *Howdycraigs*—a place situated among that portion of the Ochils already noticed.

When she entered upon this engagement, which was to last for a year, she was spoken of as "a weel *reikit* lass"—the meaning of which phrase is, that she had already provided what was considered a woman's part of the furnishing of a house; and some of the sober matrons "wondered what had come owre a' the lads noo," and said, "they were sure Nelly Kilgour wad mak a better wife than ony o' thae young glaikit hizzies wha carried a' their reikin to the kirk on their back ilka Sabbath." But, of Nelly's being made a wife, there was no prospect; she was *three-and-thirty;* so far as was known, no lover had ever ventured to throw himself upon his knees before her, begging to be permitted to kiss her *foot,* and threatening, at the same time, to *hang himself,* if she did not consent to be his better half; still there was no appearance of any one doing so; and those who delighted in tracing effects back to their proper causes, began to recollect that her mother, "when she was a thoughtless lassie," had once given some offence to one of the witches, who were accused of holding nightly revels in the glen; and the witch, by way of retaliation, had said, that, "the bairn unborn would maybe hae cause to rue its mother's impudence." Nelly had been born after this oracular saying was uttered; and the aged dames who remembered it, doubted not that this was the true cause of her celibacy. And when they heard that she was engaged to go to Howdycraigs at Martinmas, and that Jock Jervis was engaged to go there also, they said that, "if it hadna been for the witch's ill *wisses,* they were sure Nelly would mak baith a better sweetheart and a better wife to Jock, than that licht-headed limmer, Lizzy Gimmerton."

From this the reader will perceive that Jock and Nelly were to be fellow-servants; he was the only man, and she was the only woman—the master and mistress excepted—about the place; and much of their time was necessarily spent together. During the stormy days of winter, when he was thrashing in the barn, she was employed in *shakin the strae* and *riddlin the corn,* which he had separated from the husks; and in the long evenings, while she was washing the dishes, or engaged in spinning, he sat by the fire, telling stories about lads and lasses, markets and tent-preachings, and sometimes he even sung a verse or two of a song, to keep her from wearying. On these occasions, she would tuck up the sleeves of her short-gown an inch or two beyond the ordinary extent, or allow her neckerchief to sink a little lower than usual, for the purpose, as is supposed, of shewing him that she was not destitute of charms, and that her arms and neck, where not exposed to the weather, were as white as those of any lady in the land. In such circumstances, Jock, who was really a lad of some spirit, could not refrain from throwing his arms about her waist, and toozling her for a kiss. This was, no doubt, the very reverse of what she had anticipated; and to these unmannerly efforts on the part of the youth, she

never failed to offer a becoming resistance, by turning away her head, to have the place threatened as far from the danger as possible—raising her hand, and holding it between their faces, so as to retard the progress of the enemy, at least for a time; and, lest these defensive operations should be misunderstoed, uttering some such deprecatory sentence as the following:—"Hoot! haud awa, Jock! If ye want a kiss, gang an' kiss Lizzy Gimmerton, an' let me mind my wark." But it has been ascertained by the ablest engineers, that the most skilfully constructed and most bravely defended fortifications must ultimately fall into the hands of a besieging army, if it be only properly provided, and persevere in the attack. This theory is no longer disputed, and the present case is one among a number of instances in which its truth has been experimentally proved. Jock was provided with a certain degree of strength, and a most laudable portion of perseverance in these matters, and, in spite of all the resistance which Nelly could offer, he was in general triumphant; after which she could only sigh and look down, as she threatened him with some terrible vengeance, such as—"making his parritch without saut," or "giving him sour milk to his sowans at supper-time," or doing something else which would seriously annoy him. At these threatenings the victor only laughed, and not unfrequently, too, he renewed the battle and repeated the offence by robbing her of another kiss. To reclaim him from these wicked ways, she could only repeat her former threatenings—adding, perhaps, to their number, anything new which happened to come into her head; but then, like those mothers who think threatening is enough, and who, by sparing the rod, sometimes spoil the child, she always forgot to inflict the punishment, when the opportunity for doing so occurred; and Jock, as a natural consequence of this remissness on the part of the *executive*, became hardened in his transgressions.

But, when not engaged in these battles, Jock was rather kind to Nelly than otherwise; sometimes he assisted her with such parts of her work as a man could perform; and sometimes, too, when the evening was wet or stormy, to save her from going out, he would take her pitchers of his own accord, and "bring in a raik of water." This kindness Nelly was careful to repay by mending his coat, darning his stockings, and performing various other little services for him. When the faculty of observation has few objects upon which to exercise itself, little things become interesting; this interchange of good offices was soon noticed by the wise women of the neighbourhood, and, as they knew of only one cause from which such things could proceed, to that cause they attributed them, making certain in their own minds that the whole secret would, some day or other, be brought before the parish by the session-clerk. Such was the general belief; and whether it were "the birds of the air," as Solomon saith, or whether it were the beggars and *chapmen* occasionally quartered at Howdycraigs, who "carried the matter," is of little importance; but, in time, the whole of the facts, with the inferences drawn therefrom, reached Nelly's former aquaintances, and then, for some reason which has never been satisfactorily explained, they saw occasion entirely to alter their previous opinion. Instead of saying, as they had done before, that "Nelly *wud* mak a guid wife to Jock—*it she wud*," they now said, that "Jock, wha was scarcely outgane nineteen, was owre young ever to think o' marryin an auld hizzie o' three-an'-thirty like her;" that "the carryin o' the water, an' the darnin o' the stockings, *wud* a' end in naething;" that "Jock *wud* be far better without her;" and when they recollected the implied malediction of the witch, they considered that it was as impossible for her to be his wife, as it is for potatoes to grow above ground; and concluded the discussion, with a pious wish, "that she might aye be keepit in the right road."

In the course of the winter, Jock had been absent for several nights, during which he was understood to have braved the terrors of witch, ghost, and fairy, in going to see Lizzie Gimmerton; but Nelly took no farther notice of the circumstance, than by asking "if he had seen naething about the Glen." On these occasions he promptly denied having been "near the Glen;" and Nelly, whither she believed him or not, was obliged to be satisfied. But this gave her an opportunity, of which she never failed to avail herself, to give him a friendly caution to "tak care o' himsel when he gaed that airt after it was dark;" nor did she forget to assign a proper reason for her care over him, by reminding him of as many of the supernatural sights which had been seen in this region, as she could remember. These hints were not without their effect; for, as the spring, which was said to be a particularly dangerous season, advanced, Jock's nocturnal wanderings were nearly discontinued. But Abernethy market, which, time out of mind, had been held between the 20th and the 30th of May, was now approaching, and to this important period the parties in question looked forward with very different feelings. *Markets* have frequently changed the destinies of lads and lasses in the same manner as *revolutions* have sometimes changed the dynasties of kings—the last always aim at subverting an established government, the first is often the means of overthrowing an empire in the heart; and, for these reasons, both should be avoided by all who would wish to live at peace. Jock looked forward to the pleasure which he should have in spending a whole day with the peerless Lizzie Gimmerton—stuffing her pockets with *sweeties* and gingerbread, and paying innumerable compliments to her beauty the while; and poor Nelly apprehended nothing less than the loss of every particle of that influence which she had some reason for supposing she now possessed over him. In this dilemma, she resolved to accompany him to the scene of action, and there to watch the revolutions of the wheel of fortune, if peradventure anything in her favour might turn up.

"Jock," said she, on the evening previous to the important day, "I'm gaun wi' ye to the market, an' ye maun gie me my market-fare."

At this announcement, Jock scratched his head, looked demure for a little, and appeared as though he would have preferred solitude to society in the proposed expedition. But he could find no excuse for declining the honour thus intended him. He recollected, moreover, that, as he had been the better for Nelly's care in time past, so her future favour was essential to his future comfort, and that it would be prejudicial in the last degree to his interest to offend her. After having thought of these things in a time infinitely shorter than that in which they can be spoken of, Jock sagely determined to yield to "necessity," which, according to the common proverb, "has no law." He also determined to watch the revolutions of the wheel of fortune, in the hope that his own case might come uppermost. But for the present, putting on as good a grace as he could—"Aweel, aweel, Nelly," said he, "I'll be unco glad o' your company; for, to say the truth, I dinna like very weel to gang through the Glen my lane. If it hadna been for you, the feint a *fit* would been at my stockings lang syne; and as ye aye darned them, an mendit the knees o' my breeks, an' the elbows o' my coat forbye, it would be ill my pairt no to gie you your market-fare. Sae we can e'en gang thegither; an if we dinna loss ither i' the throng, I'll maybe get you to come owre the hill wi' at night."

"Mind noo ye've promised," said Nelly, highly pleased with the reception her proposal had met—"mind ye've promised to come hame wi' me; an' there's no ane in a' the warld I would like sae weel to come hame wi' as our ain Jock."

"I'll mind that," said Jock. But, notwithstanding what he said, he had no intention of coming home with Nelly; his thoughts ran in another direction; he had merely spoken of the thing, because he fancied it would *please*; the idea of her presence, as matters now stood, was anything but agreeable to him; and he trusted to the chapter of accidents for "losing her i' the thrang," as himself would have said, and thus regaining his freedom.

On the following day, they journeyed together to the scene of popular confusion—whiling away the time with such conversation as their knowledge of courtships, marriages, births, baptisms, and burials, could supply. Nelly frequently looked in Jock's face, to try if she could read his thoughts; but somehow, in the present instance, his eyes were either turned upon the ground, or seized with an unwonted wandering: at one time he kept carefully examining the road, as though he had lost a shilling; at another he surveyed the tops of the distant hills with as much care as if he had been speculating upon their heights and distances. And while these intelligencers were thus employed, she could read but little; yet, nevertheless, his manner was courteous; and in their conduct and conversation they exhibited a fine specimen of that harmony which, in most instances, results from a wish to please and to be pleased on the part of the female.

On arriving at the market, Jock soon discovered the mistress of his affections in the person of Lizzie Gimmerton. But, in the plenitude of her power, and the extent of her dominions, she had become capricious, as despotic sovereigns are very apt to do; and, nettled, as it appeared, at the long intervals which had lately occurred between the times of his making obeisance at her throne, she had chosen another sweetheart, whom she now dignified with the honour of leading her from place to place, and shewing her off to the admiring multitude. Supported by this new minister, she seemed to pay no attention to the smiles and sly winks with which Jock greeted her; but still he did not despair of being the successful candidate, if he were only left at liberty to offer the full amount of his devotion; and to this object he now began to direct his thoughts.

A certain chapman had displayed a number of necklaces, and other showy trinkets of little value, upon his stand, which was thus the most brilliantly decorated of any in the market. This had drawn together a crowd of purchasers, and other people, who were anxious to see the sparkling wares. Men civilly pushed aside men, and maidens pushed aside maidens, while each appeared eager to have a peep at some particular article, or to learn the price thereof; and to this place Jock drew Nelly, under pretence of giving her her market-fare, from among the gewgaws which it afforded. But, while she was looking about for something which "she might wear for his sake," as she said, and which, at the same time, would be an easy purchase, he contrived to jostle rather rudely the people on both sides of him, making them jostle those who stood next them, and those again perform the same operation on others at a greater distance. This, as he had anticipated, soon produced a universal hubbub; every one, to be avenged for the insult or the injury he had sustained, thrust his elbows into the sides of such as he supposed were the aggressors. These were not slow to retaliate. In a short time, the innocent and the guilty were involved in the same confusion; and while the precious wares of the packman, and the persons of his customers, were both in imminent danger, Jock started off, leaving Nelly to make the best of her way out of a bad bargain. He had now obtained his freedom; and, in a twinkling, he was by the side of Lizzie Gimmerton, whom he found at another stand, receiving the benediction of her new joe in the form of a "penny-worth of *peppermint drops*."

"How are ye the day, Lizzie?" said he, in tones so tender, that he had supposed they would melt any heart which was less hard than Clatchert Craig.

"No that ill, Jock," was the reply; "hoo are ye yersel, an' hoo's Nelly?" And therewith the damsel put her arm in that of her companion, whom she now permitted, or rather urged, to lead her away; and, as he did so, she turned on Jock a sidelong look, accompanied by a sort of smile, which told him, in terms not to be mistaken, that he was not her only sweetheart, and that, at present, he was not likely to be a successful one.

If we could form such a thing as a proper conception of one who, in attempting to ascend a throne, stumbled, fell below it, and, in looking up from thence, saw another seated in his place, perhaps we should have some idea of Jock's feelings on this occasion. Like a true hero, he, no doubt, thought of thrashing his rival's skin for him; but then this was by no means doing the whole of the work, for it was Lizzie Gimmerton who had led away the man and not the man who had led away Lizzie Gimmerton; and, though the man were thrashed into chaff, Lizzie Gimmerton might very probably find as many more as she pleased, willing to be led away in the same manner, which, in the end, might entail upon Jock the labour of thrashing hall the people in the market, not to mention the risk which he would run of being thrashed himself. Finding that this plan would not do, it were difficult to say if he did not entertain serious thoughts of making a pilgrimage to the river Earn, for the purpose of drowning himself, or of taking signal vengeance upon the hard-hearted maiden in some other way; but, as farther speculations upon the subject, in the existing state of our information, must be purely conjectural, it were absurd to follow them. In the beginning of his despair, he looked down, as men very naturally do; but, in the middle of it, he looked up to see what was to be done, and there he saw Nelly, who was not so easily "lost i' the thrang" as he had imagined, standing close beside him, and regarding him with a look of real compassion, which contrasted strongly with the malicious smile of the other damsel.

"Dinna vex yersel owre sair, Jock," said she, "though Lizzie's awa wi' anither lad; when he leaves her, I'll warrant she'll be glad to see ye again."

"The deil confound her an' her lads baith!" said Jock, his despair beginning to pass off in a passion. "If ever I gae near her again, may I fa' an' break my leg i' the first burn I cross! Ye're worth at least five dozen o' her yersel, Nelly; an' if ye can let byganes be byganes, an' gang wi' me through the market, I'll let her see, afore lang, that I can get anither sweetheart, though she should gang an' hang hersel!"

This sudden change in Jock's sentiments must have been produced by what is commonly called a *reaction*. But Nelly, who had no inclination for being thus shewn off, tried to persuade him to desist from his present purpose.

"Na, na, Jock," said she, "we'll no gang trailin through the market like twa *pointers* tethered thegither wi' a string, for fear the youngest ane should rin off. But, if ye like, I'se try to keep sight o' ye; an', if ye like too, we'll gang hame afore it's late, for it would vex me sair to see you spendin your siller *unwordily*, an' still sairer to hear tell o' ye gettin ony fright about the Glen. Sae if ye think me worth your while, we can gang hame thegither, an' I'll tak your arm after we're on the road. If a lad hae ony wark wi' a lass, or a lass ony wark wi' a lad, it's no the best way to be lettin a' the warld ken about it."

With her care, and the wisdom of her counsel upon this occasion, Jock felt sensibly touched.

"Aweel, Nelly," said he, "I'll e'en tak your advice; ye never counselled me to do a wrang thing in your life, an' I'll gang hame wi' ye ony time ye like. But come away," he continued, "an' look out some grand thing for

your market-fare. I've ten shillings i' my pouch—no ae bawbee o't spent yet; an' be what it like, if that'll buy't, ye's no want it."

In compliance with his wishes, they began to look about for the article in question; but Nelly, who had lived long enough to know the value of money, would suffer him to purchase nothing of an expensive nature; and, after some friendly expostulation, a pair of scissors was agreed upon, for which he paid sixpence, and she put them in her pocket, observing, at the same time, that "they would be o' mair use to her than twenty ells o' ribbon, or a hale pouchfu' o' *sweeties*."

"I've often wondered," said she, "if a lass could hae ony *real* likin for a lad, when she was temptin him to fling awa his siller, buyin whigmaleeries, to gar her look like an *antic* amang ither folk, or how she thought a lad wha would let his siller gang that gaet, could ever provide for the wants o' a house, if they should come to hae ane o' their ain."

Jock readily acknowledged the good sense of all this; he also acknowledged to himself that young women with such sentiments were not over and above being rife; and, though Nelly was not very young, he thought her a more discerning lass than he had ever done before. They therefore kept together during what remained of their stay; and, as Jock's greatest fault was a propensity to spend his money on trifles, Nelly easily persuaded him to accompany her home before the afternoon was far advanced.

They accordingly journeyed up the glen together; and, without encountering either ghost, witch, or fairy, they had reached a part of the road from which a house, a barn, and a byre, were to be seen. The husband and wife were already home from the market, whither they had gone to buy a cow, and standing at the end of the house with their three children, the oldest of whom appeared to be a stout girl, beside them. Such scenes seem to have a peculiar charm for women, and Nelly was the first to notice it.

"Look, Jock," said she, "yonder's Andrew Braikens an' his wife hame frae the market already. Dinna ye see them standing at the end of their house there, an' their three bairns beside them, an' baith lookin as happy as the day's lang? Noo, Jock," she continued, looking in his face as she spoke, "tak an example by them, an' when ye get a wife, if she's a guid ane, aye tak her advice afore ony ither body's, an' ye'll never hae cause to rue it. Afore Andrew was married, he ran to a' the markets i' the round; he could never win hame that day he gaed awa'; his pouches were aye toom, an' his duds were often like to bid him guid-day. Folk ca'd him a *weirdless cretur* an a *ne'er-do-weel*; an' when he fell in wi' Tibby Crawford, some o' them said if they were her, they wouldna tak him, an' ithers leugh at him for drawin' up wi' an auld hizzie like her; but Tibby took Andrew, an' Andrew took Tibby's advice; an' noo they've a haudin o' their ain, wi' plenty o' baith meat an' claes, an' three bonny bairns into the bargain."

Jock seemed to listen more attentively to this harangue then he had ever done to a sermon in his life. During the latter part of it he appeared thoughtful; and, when it was concluded—"I've been thinkin'," said he, "that, as Andrew an' Tibby hae come sae weel on"—— Here he seemed to have forgotten what he was about to say, and was silent.

"Weel, Jock," said the other, "as I was gaun to say, there's Betsy Braikens, a stout lassie already; she's Sandy Crawford's cousin, as ye ken brawly, an' troth I wouldna wonder muckle at seein her"——

"Ou ay, Nelly," interrupted Jock; "but, as I was gaun to tell ye, I've been thinkin"—— Here, however, he again halted, and seemed to have nothing farther to say.

"I dinna ken what ye've been thinkin" said Nelly, after a considerable pause; "but I think they would need to hae a hantle patience that listen to your thoughts, for ye're unco lang o' comin out wi' them. But, whatever they are, ye needna hesitate sae muckle in tellin them to me, for I never tell'd a tale o' yours owre again in my life."

"It's no for that either," said Jock, laughing; "but I juist thought shame to speak about it, an' yet there's nae ill in't, after a'—I've been thinkin, aye since ye wouldna let me gie half-a-crown for yon *strowl* o' lace i' the market, that you an' me micht do waur than make a bargain oorsels. I wad juist need somebody like you to look after me; an' noo, Nelly, if ye would promise to be my wife, I would never seek anither."

Nelly's countenance brightened up with a glow of satisfaction, such as it had not exhibited for years, at hearing these words. But, striving to suppress those unwonted feelings which were rising in her bosom, and endeavouring to appear as unconcerned as before—"Hoot, Jock," was her reply, "what need I promise?—though I were to mak twenty promises, ye ken brawly that ye would juist rin awa an' leave me, to fallow the first bonny lass ye saw, at the next market or the next tent-preachin; an' then, *guid-day to ye, Nelly.*"

These words, though apparently intended to discourage Jock in his suit, were spoken in such a manner as to produce a quite contrary effect. We need not, however, repeat his vows and promises, and the solemn oaths with which he confirmed them: they were such as have been a thousand times made, and, sad to say, nearly as often broken, upon similar occasions. But when they were concluded, though Nelly did not speak, she *looked* a promise which, to Jock, was satisfactory: she also allowed him to have a kiss without the customary battle, or, at least, without a battle of the customary length; and for what remained of that and the two following days, though she was three-and-thirty, she looked almost as young as if she had been only two-and-twenty.

But "pleasures," which everybody now likens to "poppies spread," are, in most instances, short-lived. On the third day from Abernethy market, Betsy Braikens, in returning from Auchtermuchty, whither she had been on some errand, called at Howdycraigs, "to speer for her cousin, Sandy Crawford, who was the herd laddie, and to tell Nelly Kilgour, of whom she had also some acquaintance, that Grizzy Glaiket had haen a bairn to Geordy Gowkshanks." "No ane kenned a single thing about it afore it cam hame," continued the girl; "and, as he has naething to enable him to pay for it, and her father is determined no to let him gang, the folk say that he'll juist hae to marry her."

Geordy Gowkshanks was no other than the beau who had been seen gallanting Lizzie Gimmerton through the market; and Nelly felt a strange misgiving, when she heard his name mentioned in the present affair, for she doubted not, when matters stood thus, that some attempt would be forthwith made to recall Jock to his former allegiance. Nor was she long left in suspense; for Jock himself soon came in for his dinner, and the girl exclaimed—"Losh, Jock, I'm glad I've seen ye, for, if ye hadna come in, I would forgotten to tell ye that I saw Lizzie last nicht, an' when I tell'd her that I was comin owre here on the morn, an' that I would maybe see you, she bade me be sure to speer if ye had gotten ony fright wi' the witches about the Glen, or if ye was feared for the *croupie craws* fleein awa wi' ye after it was dark, that ye never cam owre to see your auld acquaintances about Abernethy noo!"

These questions, and the new light which they threw upon an old subject, made both Jock and Nelly look thoughtful, though it is reasonable to suppose their thoughts ran in very different channels. The effects of *reaction* have been already noticed; but, after *reaction* has *acted*, there are such things as the *actions* themselves beginning

to *react*. Jock was now under the influence of the last-mentioned principle. Its exact operations need not be particularized; but, from that hour, his kindness to Nelly began to abate, and she began to feel less comfortable under the change than might have been expected from a discreet damsel of her years. On the following night, she slept but little; and, next morning, she rose earlier than was her usual, and was just beginning to kindle up the fire, when she heard Jock engaged in a low but earnest conversation with the *herd laddie*. She was separated from them only by a thin partition, or *clay hallan*, as it was called in those days, so that she could easily hear what was passing; and, reprehensible as her conduct in this respect may seem, she could not refrain from listening.

"I need a new bannet," said Jock; "an' I'm gaun owre to Abernethy for ane the morn's nicht—but mind, Sandy, ye mauna tell Nell whar I am; an,' if she happens to speer, ye can just say that I'm awa down to Auchtermuchty for a pickle snuff."

"Aweel, aweel," said the other; "I can haud my tongue. But what need can there be for makin lees aboot it? I'll warrant Nell winna care hoo aften ye gang to Abernethy."

"I hae nae time to tell ye aboot it 'enow," said Jock; "but I'll maybe tell ye afterhend—an' mind, as your name's Sandy Crawford, dinna ye speak aboot it; an' I'll gie ye as muckle market-fare as ye can devour, *gin* midsimmer."

As this conversation concluded, Nelly contrived to get into her bed again without noise; and, covering herself up with the bedclothes, and pretending to sleep, Jock passed through the kitchen without in the least suspecting that she had become a party to his supposed secret. From what she had heard, however, she saw plainly what was *brewing*, and whither fate was tending. She saw that Lizzy Gimmerton's scheme for once more attaching Jock to her interest had already succeeded; and that, if he should "break both his leg and his neck in the first burn he crossed," he had determined to go again and see her. But what could she do to prevent things from taking their course? Like other disconsolate maidens, she might lament in secret, and shed tears of disappointment and sorrow without number—but this would by no means mend the matter. Jock, she thought, would make a good husband, if he had only a wife who knew how to manage him; but, unless something extraordinary interposed, he was likely to get one who was a still greater fool than himself; and, at this distance of time, it were difficult to say how far *benevolence*, and a wish to prevent him from making himself a mis-sworn man, might have a place in her cogitations. She thought, also, that she would make a good wife, if it were only her good fortune to get a husband; but, then, something or other had always come to thwart her wishes in this respect; and, even now, when the prize seemed almost won, without a miracle, or something, at least, out of the ordinary course of events, she stood a fair chance for being again left in the lurch. She felt that it was a sore matter to have hope from time to time deferred in this manner; but what to do she could not exactly determine. She, however, determined to leave nothing undone; and, after her, let none despair!

Whether upon that morning the cows had given an extraordinary quantity of milk, or whether Nelly had forgotten to empty the milking-pail of water before she began to milk them, is not known; but, on coming in from the byre, she could not, by any means, get the cogs to hold the milk. Her mistress was called; and, after some consultation, Nelly recollected that "Margaret Crawford"—who was the *herd laddie's* mother—"had plenty o' milk-dishes; an' she would maybe lend them a cog or twa."

"The drap milk that the cogs winna haud may stand i' the water-pitcher afore supper-time," she continued; "an' Sandy may rin owre to Gairyburn, after he comes in, an' stay a' nicht wi' his mither, an' get the cog, an' be back next morning in time to tak oot the kye."

This plan seemed, at least, feasible; and the farther prosecution of it was left to Nelly.

"What's the matter wi' the milk the nicht?" inquired Sandy, as Nelly was hastening him with his supper.

"I ken o' naething that can be the matter," was her reply—"but what's the matter wi't, say ye?"

"I dinna ken either," said the boy; "but it's turned terrible blue-like, isn't? I can compare it to naething but the syndins o' my mither's sye-dish."

"Hoot! never mind the milk," rejoined Nelly; "but sup ye up yer supper as fast as ye're able, an' rin owre to yer mither, an' tell her the mistress sent ye to see if she could gie ye a len' o' ane o' her milk-cogs, for a fortnicht or sae, till the *first flush* gang aff Hawky. Ye can stay a' nicht at Gairyburn," she added; "an' ye'll be back in braw time next morning to gang *out*."

The boy seemed glad of an opportunity to spend a night in his paternal home. His supper was soon dispatched, and away he went.

The shortsightedness of mortals has been a theme for the moralists of all ages to descant upon; and Nelly, had her history been sooner known, might have afforded them as good a subject as any which they have hitherto discussed. Attached as she evidently was to Jock, had her foresight extended so far as to shew her what was to follow, she would have certainly strained every nerve to prevent him from being left alone on that momentous night. Alone however, he was left; and—as he lay dreaming of Lizzy Gimmerton, and the happiness he should experience from finding himself again reinstated in her favour—exactly at the solitary hour of midnight a most terrible apparition entered his apartment. How it entered was never known; for the *outer* door was securely locked; and the good people of the house being, one and all, fast asleep, saw it not; but, as doors, windows, walls, and roofs, afford no obstruction to an immaterial essence, its entrance need not be matter of surprise. It was, in all respects save one, a most legitimate ghost. A winding sheet was wrapped round what appeared to be its body; its head was tied up in a white handkerchief; and its face and hands, where they were visible, were as white as the drapery in which it was attired; but, then, in its right hand it carried *a candle*—a thing which ghosts are not accustomed to do. But, as there are exigencies among mortals which sometimes oblige them to deviate from the common rules of conduct, the same things may, perhaps, occur among ghosts. In the present instance, indeed, something of the kind seemed to be indispensable; for, without such aid, more than half its terrors would have been invisible. The candle, moreover, was evidently the candle of a ghost; for it shewed only a small point of white flame in the middle, while, around the edges, it burned as blue as *brimstone* itself. In short, the light which it gave must have been a thousand times more appalling than that of those flames which Milton emphatically calls "darkness visible."

Jock, however, still continued to sleep, till it uttered a hollow groan, which awakened him; and then, rubbing his eyes, to make certain that he was not still dreaming, he stared at it in inexpressible terror. It returned his stare with a steady look of defiance and a horrible grin, which seemed to make the blood curdle at the remotest extremity of his body. It, however, appeared willing to abide by the law of ghosts, and to wait in silence till it should be spoken to. But Jock had already lost the power of speech. His erected hair had nearly thrown off his nightcap; his tongue seemed to have fallen back into his throat; not even a scream of terror could he utter, far less an articulate sound; and it might have waited till morning, or till the end of time, before an accent of his had set it at liberty to

deliver its message. But here it shewed itself possessed of something like "business habits," or, at least, of ten times more sense than the majority of those ghosts who, "at the crowing of the cock," have been obliged to run off without having effected anything except perhaps frightening some rustic nearly out of his wits. When *it* saw no prospect of being spoken to, it spoke; and in this its example should be imitated by all future ghosts.

"Jock Jervis," it said, in tones so hollow and so sepulchral that no farther doubts could be entertained of its authority—"Jock Jervis, ye ken the promises an' the solemn oaths ye've made already to Nelly Kilgour; and, if ye dinna fulfil thae promises, and mak her your marred wife afore a fortnight is at an end, ye maun gang to hell-fire to be burnt for a mis-sworn loon. An' mair than a' that, if ye prove fause-hearted, I'll choke ye wi' this winding-sheet, an' fling ye owre my shouther, an' carry ye to Arangask kirkyard, an' gie ye to the witches to pike your banes ahint the aisle, afore ye get leave to gang aff the earth."

Having uttered this terrible malediction, it shook its winding-sheet, and then waved the candle round its head. The *white* part of the flame immediately disappeared; the *blue* parted into a thousand fragments, and flew though the apartment in as many directions, like infernal meteors.

While these appalling phenomena were passing before the eyes of the terrified spectator, the ghost had disappeared, he could scarcely tell how, and in a moment more all was dark—awfully dark. But of those terrific sparkles which the candle had emitted in going out, one had fallen on Jock's hand, which happened to be lying out of the bedclothes, and there it continued to sputter and to burn most distressingly blue, till the pain—which, in this case, amounted to torment—and the absence of the ghost, restored his speech; or, at least, restored him the use of his tongue. He roared out most lustily for comfort in his distress, and for assistance against his spiritual enemies, in case they should reappear; and the noise which he thus made soon alarmed Nelly, who, with her under petticoat hastily thrown on, and wanting the whole of her upper garments, came into the apartment, holding a half-trimmed lamp in her hand, rubbing her eyes, and alternately speaking to herself and him.

"Sic a noise I never heard i' my life; an' yet, I dinna like to gae near him afore I get my claes on; but that's awfu—Jock, man, what's the matter wi' ye? Na, no ae word will he speak, but roar an' cry as if somebody were stickin him. Jock, man, it's me—it's your auld acquaintance, Nelly; but tell me, Jock, hae ye gane clean out o' yer judgment?"

"O Nelly, Nelly!" said Jock, "is't you—is't you?—gie's a haud o' yer hand, woman—oh, gie's a haud o' yer hand, for I canna speak."

"Atweel no," said Nelly; "if ye had on yer claes, an' were butt at the kitchen fire, I might maybe gie ye my hand if it were to do ye guid; but, as lang as ye lie there, an' roar an' squall that gate, ye needna look for a hand o' mine."

"Aweel, Nelly, I canna help it," said the other. "I'll never be at the kitchen fire again, I fear; an' if ye dinna gie me your hand, ye'll maybe repent it when it's owre late; for I canna stand this lang, an' I'll no be lang to the fore. My hand's burnin as if it were in a smiddy-fire; but that's naething. Oh, if I could only touch somebody, to let me ken it's flesh an' blood that I'm speakin till."

On hearing that he was really in pain, Nelly could no longer stand back. "Dear me," said she, "what can be the matter wi' ye?" and, as she spoke, she took his hand in hers to examine it with the lamp. "It's burnt, I declare!" she continued, in a tone of sympathy, which appeared somewhat to comfort him; "how did that happen? But I maun rin for some *sour 'ream* to rub it wi'."

"No, no, Nelly," said Jock, grasping her hand firmly in his, to detain her, and now considerably relieved by the consciousness that he was in the presence of one who had hands and arms, and a body of flesh and blood like his own; "dinna leave me," he continued, "an' I'll tell ye a about it. It's no five minutes yet since I saw a ghaist—oh, dear, oh, dear! it gars my very blood rin cauld o think on't. An' it said, if I dinna marry you in less than a fortnight, I maun gang to hell-fire to be burnt, for the promises I made i' the Glen. O Nelly, Nelly, tak pity on me, an' let the marriage be on Munonday, or Tysday at farrest."

"You're surely wrang, Jock," was the reply; "if the ghaist kenned onything ava, it would ken brawly that ye had nae wark wi' me. It had been Lizzie Gimmerton it bade ye tak, an' ye had juist taen up the tale wrang."

"No, no," rejoined the other; "it was you—it was Nelly Kilgour. Oh, I'll never forget its words!—an' if ye winna tak pity on me, what am I to do?"

"Ye needna speer what ye're to do at me," said Nelly; "but it seems the ghaist an' you maun think that ye can get me to *marry* ony time ye like, juist as ye would get a pickle strae to gather up ahint your horse on a mornin. But I dare say, after a', the ghaist would ken brawly, that it needna sent you to Lizzie upon sic an errand, for the first lad that would gang awa wi' her, she would gang awa wi' him, and leave you to whistle on your thumb or your forefinger, if it answered you better; an' yet ye might gang owre *the morn's nicht*, an' gie her a trial."

The awful words—"Hell-fire," and "pike your banes at the back o' the aisle," were still ringing in Jock's ears. Nelly's observation seemed to preclude all hope of escape from the terrible doom which they plainly denounced, and he groaned deeply, but did not speak: this was what the other could not endure, and she now tried to comfort him in the best manner she could.

"I'm no sayin," she resumed, "but I would tak ye, rather than see ony ill come owre ye, if ye would only promise to gie up your glaikit gates, an' to do your best to keep yoursel an' me comfortable." Here she was interrupted by the guidman, who, like herself, had been awakened by the first alarm; but, in coming into the kitchen, and hearing only Jock and her conversing together, he had thought it best to dress himself before he entered upon an investigation of the matter. He was now at the bedside, however, and anxious to learn what had occasioned such an uproar. And Jock, who had been partly recovered from his terror by Nelly's presence, and partly by her assurance that she would become his wife rather than see him carried away by his spiritual foe, began to give them a most sublime account of the ghost.

"I canna tell ye hoo it came in," said he, "for it was i' the middle o' the floor afore I was waukin. But when I first opened my een, there it stood wi' three or four winding sheets about it, an' its head rowed up in a white clout, an' its face an' its hands a hantle whiter than either the winding sheets or the clout—only I thought I saw some earth stickin on that side o' its nose that was farrest frae the light. But what was a thousand times waur than a' that, it had a cannel in its hand that might weel terrified a hale army o' sodgers; an' I aye think yet, it had been the deevil himsel, an' nae ghaist, for the cannel had juist a wee *peek* o' white low i' the middle, an' a' round the edges it burnt as blue as a blawort, an' bizzed an' spitted, an' threw out sparks like blue starns. An' after it had telled me what I've telled you, it gae the cannel a wave round its head, an' then the hale hoose, wa's, roof, an' riggin, gaed a' in a blue low; an' I saw the ghaist flee up through the couple bauks as clear as ever I saw the owsen afore me when the sun was shinin! But I could stand nae mair, for I steekit my een, an' I'm sure I lay dead for near an hour. But, when I came to life again, the hale house was filled wi' a

smell o' brimstane that would putten down a' the bees'-skeps i the yard ; an' my right hand was burnin juist as if ye had dippit it in a tar-kettle, an' then set a lunt till't ; but it was ten times waur than tar, for it had the smell o' brimstane, an' it would scarcely gang out. The pain garred me roar as I never roared in a' my life afore ; an' I'm sure I'll never forget the relief I felt when Nelly came to see what had happened."

As an evidence of the truth of this account, Jock shewed them his hand, upon which a portion of the skin was really burnt as black as a cinder. The goodman and the goodwife, both of whom were now present, stood astonished at this circumstance ; but Nelly, who had evinced a considerable degree of composure in this trying scene, now appeared less dismayed.

"Hoot, man !" said she, addressing Jock, "dinna gang out o' your wits though ye've gotten a fear ; mony a ane has seen a ghaist, an' lived to see their bairns' bairns after a'—sae may ye, if ye would only tak heart again."

"O Nelly, Nelly," said Jock, "I might maybe tak heart, if ye would only promise faithfully, afore witnesses, to let yoursel be married next week."

"What need I promise," rejoined Nelly, "when, for onything I ken, ye may be gaun to see Lizzie Gimmerton *the morn's nicht ?*"

"Oh, dear ! oh, dear !" ejaculated Jock. Again the terrible denunciation of the ghost rang in his ears, and again he groaned in an agony of despair. But here the master and mistress interposed in his behalf, and, by their mediation, Nelly was at last brought to consent to that important change in her condition which alone would save him from perdition. She still insisted, however, on making conditions ; and these were, *first*, that he should not go to a market except when he had some business to transact ; *second*, that, upon these occasions, he should always take her along with him, if she was willing to go ; *third*, that he should never enter upon any important concern without first apprizing her of it ; and, *fourth*, that he should always come home to his own fireside when his day's work was done.

These conditions were readily subscribed by Jock, or, what is the same thing, they were agreed to before witnesses, after which Nelly frankly consented to be his wife. When this had been settled, she would have made out another set of conditions, specifying what her own conduct was to be, and what he might expect of her in certain situations ; but Jock had determined on making an unconditional surrender of himself and his effects into her hands ; and all she was permitted to say, was that "she would do her best to mak a guid wife to him."

Matters were thus far satisfactorily adjusted ; but still Jock could not rest till his promised bride was *contracket*, as he phrased it ; and, to free his mind from those remains of terror under which he still laboured, the master of the house went in quest of the dominie as soon as daylight began to appear. Dominies are seldom slow in these matters ; a contract of marriage was forthwith drawn up in the usual form ; due proclamation of their intentions was made in the church next Sabbath ; and, as the case was an urgent one, they were cried out in the same day. On Monday the marriage was solemnized in a becoming manner ; and, when the parties were put to bed, Jock, who had up to that moment been rather feverish on the subject of the ghost, declared that "he wasna feared noo."

Had this marriage been brought about by ordinary means, it might have staggered some of the lieges in their faith—at least it must have taxed their ingenuity to reconcile the event, happening, as it had done, in the face of a plain prediction, with the unlimited power which the witches certainly possessed ; but, as it was, the matter needed no comment. The decision of the witch had evidently been reversed in the court of the ghosts who, from being a superior order, had power to do such things ; and thus Nelly Kilgour had got a husband, even after she had been predestined, by the former of these authorities, to a life of single blessedness.

Jock had also good reason to congratulate himself on the intervention of his spiritual *friend*—the ghost being no longer regarded as an enemy—for, in less than six months from the date of his marriage, Lizzie Gimmerton was discovered to be in a condition which would have been rather derogatory to his fame, had she been his yoke-fellow. It was acknowledged upon all hands, however, that he had got a better bargain. In a few weeks after the marriage, his appearance was so much improved, that people, of their own accord, began to call him *John ;* and, in another month, his wife was the only individual who still persisted in calling him *Jock*. But this, in her case, was, as it appeared, "habit and repute," and could not be easily altered. Whoever had an empty snuff-box, Jock's was always full ; whoever might be seen at church with coarse or ill-washed linen, Jock was not among the number ; whoever went to the public-house, or to the houses of their neighbours, for amusement, Jock came always home "to his ain fireside ;" and, when others were heard to complain of the thriftlessness of their wives, he only said, that "he had aye been a hantle better since he got Nelly than ever he was afore."

In conclusion, it may be remarked, that, though Nelly was evidently the *managing partner*, she gave herself no airs of superiority. She seldom did anything without taking her husband's advice ; but, while she sought, she tried to direct his opinion into the proper channel, by pointing out what was likely to be the results of the affair, if it were conducted in such a manner ; and thus his advice was, in general, only an echo of her own sentiments. If Jock, in the presence of others, directed her to do anything, she, in general, did it, without questioning its propriety ; but, if she thought it was wrong, she represented the case to him when they were by themselves—telling him, at the same time, that "she just did it to please him, though she thought it was wrang." Upon these occasions, his common reply was—

"'Deed ay, Nelly, I dare say ye're richt. I dinna aye see sae far afore me as ye do ; but, I'm sure, wi' a' my faults, ye canna say but I like ye as weel yet as ever I did."

"Deed do ye," was frequently Nelly's rejoinder ; "an' proud am I to think that my ain Jock aye likes his ain wife better than ither folk."

Within a year after their marriage, Nelly made her husband the father of a female child, who was christened Jenny Jervis. In a few years, their united industry enabled them to stock the little farm of Rummledykes—of which they were so fortunate as to obtain a *tack*. The place consisted, for the most part, of pasture-ground ; but Jock laboured assiduously to improve and cultivate it. Nelly, by her management of the dairy, contributed materially to increase their possessions ; and here we must leave them, contented and happy, for the present—promising, however, to give the reader some glimpses of their subsequent history—and perhaps some hints, too, which may enable him to form his own conjectures as to those supernatural appearances which brought about their union —in a future story.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE GHOST OF GAIRYBURN;

BEING THE SEQUEL TO "THE GHOST OF HOWDYCRAIGS."

It would be both trite and bombastic to say, as some orators have done, that "time rolls on;" and yet it is wholly owing to their having been so often repeated, that such sayings excite no interest, and the subjects to which they refer pass unnoticed; for, however we may forget the truth, or however the regular recurrence of evening and morning, summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, may make us callous to the result which these revolutions are destined to produce, nothing can be more certain than that Time never pauses in his career. His progress may be observed, not only in those great events which give birth to new eras in the history of the world—in the overthrow of ancient empires, the extinction of ancient dynasties, and the discovery of new countries: it may be traced in the occurrences of every year, every month, and almost of every day. The connections of families, the numbers of which they are composed, their relative position in society, and their prospects in life, are undergoing perpetual changes. Changeable as are the fortunes, so are the minds and the emotions of men; one hour they laugh, another they weep; and, perhaps, the very next hour they laugh again; while events the most important and the most trifling, the most solemn and the most ludicrous, mingle together, and follow each other by a law which fools our powers of investigation, and baffles our understanding.

Eighteen years had nearly elapsed since the period at which the former part of this history concludes; and *the Ghost of Howdycraigs* was nearly forgotten. Betsy Braikens, who was then only a girl, was now a full-grown woman, who, for the last eight or nine of the above-mentioned years, would not have been irreconcilably offended with a well-looking sweetheart for proposing to make her his wife. Her brother James, who, in the same interval, had arrived at man's estate, had been endeavouring, not very successfully, for some time past, to establish himself as a merchant in Perth; and his cousin, Sandy Crawford, whom the reader will recollect as the herd laddie at Howdycraigs, had, by the death of his father, been promoted to be tacksman of Gairyburn; upon which place he resided with his mother. Jenny Jervis, too, with whose birth the preceding story concludes, was, by this time, a lass upon whom those who were neither too young nor too old might have looked with as much interest at least as it is common to bestow on a maiden in her eighteenth year. It is also probable, that she herself had begun to steal an occasional glance at the young men of the district, as she saw them passing on the road, or assembled at their rustic sports; and to recollect, when her mind was otherwise unoccupied, that one was tall, that another had dark eyes, that a third had a smiling countenance; and, perhaps, that a fourth united all these charms in his proper person.

It was the middle of winter, or what is commonly called 'the daft-days"—which has long been a season of festivity to the rich, and, in so far as circumstances will permit, to the poor also. The cottagers were invited to each other's houses to spend an evening in forgetfulness of care. Cakes, cheese, and ale, supplied them with a cheap, and, at the same time, a cheery repast. The old people talked of bygone times, and the feats of dexterity or strength which they had performed in their youth, with all the enthusiasm of heroes when "fighting their battles over again;" while the young ones looked in each other's faces, and laughed heartily at little jests. Unpremeditated compliments were paid in off-handed profusion; old and incredible stories were revived; and, in the words of Goldsmith, "news much older than their ale went round:" but, whatever might be their age, at such seasons they were certain to produce as much merriment as upon the occasion when they were first produced. To conclude the picture—

> "The nappy reek'd wi' mantling 'ream,
> An' shed a heart-inspiring stream;
> An' luntin pipe an' sneeshin mill
> Were handed round wi' richt guid will."

Sandy Crawford and his mother had been invited to 'get their cakes," and spend the evening with John Jervis and his wife. They came, according to custom; and, after the cheese, the oaten bread and the ale had been sent round in the usual manner—

"Troth, Nelly," said Margaret Crawford, addressing her hostess, "your Jenny's turned a perfect woman, I declare. Sic an odds there's on her within the last twelmonth! Mony a time I look at her when she's gaun past; an', to say the truth, ye may weel be proud o' yer dochter, for I dinna see a bonnier lassie i' the hale countryside than she is."

"Beauty is only skin-deep," said Nelly, with a smile of satisfaction, which shewed how highly she appreciated the quality in her daughter which she pretended to undervalue. "But the lassie's weel enough, though she were nae friend o' mine. An' noo, Sandy," she continued, in a jesting tone, and turning from the mother to the son as she spoke, "what think ye o' her for a wife? Yer mither seems to be unco weel pleased wi' her; I'm sure I would like weel to see ye gang thegither, an' I dinna think our Jock would say onything against sic a marriage."

"Hoot, woman," interrupted her husband, "were I to haver like you, I would say that, if I thought she would only turn out half as guid a wife to him as you've dune to me, I would maist advise him to tak her; but she's our ain bairn, an' we should haud our tongues."

"That's as true as ye hae said it," rejoined Nelly, "faithers an' mithers should say little on sic a subject; but as this is a nicht on which a' body haivers, ye maun juist allow me to haiver too—when folk only haiver for diversion it can do little ill. An' sae, as I was gaun to say," she continued, again addressing Sandy—"your mither seems to be pleased; I'm weel pleased; Jock's no that sair set against the match—an' noo there's naebody's consent awantin but your ain."

"Ay," said Sandy, "there's anither yet, though you've forgotten about it—ye maun get her consent too afore it can be a bargain. Jenny has a heart as weel as her neebors, I'll warrant her," he continued, stealing a look at the object of whom he spoke, "an' I'm maybe no amang the folk she likes best."

"Weel, Jenny, it's a' at your door noo, I declare," said her mother, laughing outright. "What say ye to this affair?"

"Oh, if ye would only haud your tongue!" said Jenny, blushing, and still keeping her eyes fixed upon a rather profitless occupation in which she had been engaged for some time past—namely, that of folding and unfolding the corners of her apron with great assiduity; but the rest of the company, if we except Sandy perhaps, were so deeply engaged in their own nonsensical conversation that they took no notice of this circumstance.

"That's juist the way wi' a' young folk," said Nelly, still laughing: "the lad thinks the lass has some ither body that she likes better than him, an' the lass thinks the lad pays mair attention to anither than he does to her; she daurna say a word unless she maybe tak the dorts an' misca him; he hesitates to speak, for fear he should be refused; an' between them they often contrive to torment ane anither for years, when twa words might settle the matter an' mak them baith happy. But I'm sure, Margaret, if they would only leave the thing to you an' me, we could mak a bargain for them the night yet."

"It's likely at least that we would mak a bargain sooner than they would do," said the other. But the sigh with which she concluded bespoke some emotion which accorded ill with the lightness of the previous conversation. There was a something too in her manner, which seemed to say that, while she was not averse to the proposed match, she did not altogether relish the jest in which its immediate consummation had been spoken of.

Mothers have frequently thrown serious obstacles in the path of young people when they supposed themselves travelling on the highway to happiness; but sometimes too they seem inclined to give them an opportunity of forming that liking for each other, without which, according to the popular creed, no happiness can exist. Nelly now proposed that, while the guidman was suppering the horse, Margaret should go with her to the byre and see the cow, the yearling, and the calf, which she said "were in wonderfu guid order considerin how little they had to gie them." Sandy and Jenny were thus left to themselves; but upon this occasion they seemed to have the greatest difficulty in keeping up a sort of intermitting conversation upon the weather, the state of the roads, and some other subjects of the same kind. Each wished to appear witty and amiable in the eyes of the other; but somehow their wits seemed to have forsaken them, and they appeared to be perfectly ignorant of the means by which their wishes could be accomplished. Perhaps the former conversation had awakened or rather called into a state of activity some feelings which they knew not how to express; and it might be, that, while these feelings predominated, they could not think of anything else, in such a manner as to talk of it to the purpose; or perhaps it was only the mere awkwardness of finding themselves, for the first time since they were children, thus left to each other, which in a great measure locked up their conversational powers. Be the matter as it may, with the "eldern dames" it was otherwise.

When they got to the byre, Margaret appeared more willing to resume the former subject than to look at her neighbour's chattels. "Ye would maybe think," said she, "that I didna seem sae frank as I might hae done when ye spoke about Jenny an' Sandy; but, for a' that, I've often thought, if ever it were the laddy's luck to get a wife, Jenny would mak a better ane than ony ither young woman I ken. But after him that's now awa began to tak death till himsel," she continued, lowering her voice to a confidental whisper, "when he made owre the tack to Sandy, he left me as a burden upon Gairyburn. Noo, the place is but sma', as ye ken, an' there's but ae house on't, an', if he were to marry, I dinna ken how a'thing would answer."

"Hoot, woman," rejoined the other, "ye've a *but an' a ben;* the house would haud ye a' brawly. And, though our lassie's owre young to be a wife to onybody, an' I was only passin a joke about her an' Sandy, if she were a year or twa aulder, an' if a'thing were agreeable, I canna say but I would like weel to see them gang thegither. For it's juist the gate o' a' mithers—they would aye like to see their ain bairns gettin guid bargains. No that I would care a snuff for the lassie gettin a man wi' a hantle riches; but I would like to see her get ane that would ken how to guide her, an' how to guide the warld too. Noo, Sandy is baith a canny an' a carefu chield; an', if they dinna thrive, I'm sure it wouldna be his faut."

"It's a' true ye say," responded Margaret, "an' weel it pleases me to hear your guid opinion o' my son. He has a wark wi' the lassie already, if I'm no far deceived; for ony time when she comes owre to our house, I've remarkit that he's aye kinder to her than to ony ither body. But there's a proverb that says, 'young wives seldom like auld guidmithers'—an' that's what troubles me."

"But that needna trouble ye owre muckle either," was the reply; "for—what's this I was gaun to say, again?—ou ay—wi' respect to Jenny, puir thing, if it were her guid fortune to draw his affection, I'm sure she would strive, as far as lay in her power, to mak ye comfortable."

"I dinna doubt a single word o' what ye say," rejoined the other. "Jenny is a dutiful an' a kind-hearted lassie; I ken that weel. But, as the auld sayin is, ilka body kens their ain sair best; an', though it's nae doubt a weakness, I maun e'en tell ye a'. When I was married—I mind as weel as yesterday—baith David an' me thought we could live happy wi' his mither; an' we did live happy, for aught days, or sae; but, after that, I could do naethin to please her. If I tried to 'earn the milk, it was either owre het or owre cauld when I pat in the 'earning; if I began to wash the dishes, she aye milkit the kye first, an' then she wondered how some folk had sae little sense. I could neither mak the parritch, nor wash, nor spin, nor mak up a hasp o' yarn—no, nor soop in the very house, to please her; an', though I tried, as far as was in my power, to do a' thing her way, it gae me mony a sleepless night, an' cost him that's awa nae little vexation. And weel do I mind mony a time I wondered what pleasure she could tak in distressin me; but I think noo it was juist a frailty o' our nature—a something that auld folk canna help. An' I think, too, I've discovered the cause o' her grumlin since I began to see the prospect o' Sandy takin a wife. Noo, ye'll nae doubt think it strange," she continued, in a hesitating tone, "ye'll nae doubt think it strange, Nelly; but, dearly as I like my ain son—an' weel as I would like to see him happy wi' a woman wha loved him better than a' the warld beside—still there's a something in the idea o' anither comin in to be the mistress o' the hoose whaur I've had the management sae lang, that aye distresses me when I think on't."

"I dinna wonder ava at what ye say," responded Nelly "If I were in your place, a' that troubles you would trouble me. But there's naebody without something to distress them; an' we maun juist look upon things o' that kind as a *crook in our lot,* a something that maun be borne. But, after a', woman, if the twa were to gang thegither, could ye no come owre here? Ye have only him, an' we have only her; the little gear we hae maun a' gang to him at last; an', if the young folk could live thegither in ane o' the places, the auld folk might surely do the same in the tither."

"Thank ye, Nelly—thank ye!" said Margaret; "ye're aye the same guid-hearted creature yet. But a body's ain hame's aye kindly. An' yet, if sic a thing were to happen, I would rather come here than gang to ony freend I hae."

As she uttered these words, she made an involuntary motion forward, and would have fallen, had she not supported herself by the wall.

"Dear me, Margaret, what's the matter wi' ye?" said Nelly, in a tone of evident alarm.

"It's a dizziness i' my head, woman," was the reply. "I've never been mysel since that illness I had afore the term. Thae curious turns come owre me aye, noo an' than," she continued, her voice sinking and saddening as she spoke; "and, for the last six weeks, it's been borne in upon me, that I'm no to be lang to the fore. Noo, if I was taen awa, Sandy would be sair to mean wi' naebody about the house but a servant; an' that gars me sometimes think I would maist like to see him married to some carefu lass like your Jenny afore my head be laid down."

"Wheesht, Margaret!" said the other; "never let thae thoughts come owre ye, for there's an auld proverb that says, *thought can kill an' thought can cure.* An' I doubt I've driven the joke owre far already. But, though it's natural enough for young lasses to like to get husbands, an' natural enough, too, for their mithers to like to see them weel married, I would ten times owre see our Jenny live an' dee without a man a'thegither, rather than see her married to the best man on earth, if her marriage were to gie you real vexation or be the means o' shortenin your days."

"It's no that," said Margaret, in the same low solemn tone in which she had before spoken—"it's no onything ye have said that has hurt me, for I've thought about a' thae things afore. When I had that ill turn afore Martinmas, when folk thought I was deein, I began to consider wha would be maist likely to keep a comfortable hame to my ain bairn; and then, I confess, my thoughts turned upon your Jenny. This made me look mair attentively at baith him and her than I had ever done before; an' twa or three times, when she cam owre to see how I was, I thought I saw something like the first symptoms of affection in his manner as weel as hers; an' I felt glad at the sight. But, as I began to get a little better, an' to be able to gang about again, the things that had happened wi' my ain guidmither came fresh to my memory, an' I thought I would like to manage the house mysel, and do for the best as lang as I was able. But I fear," she added, with a deep sigh, "this complaint, whatever it is, will weather me afore it's lang."

"Na, Margaret; I hope better things," said the other; "an' ye maun strive to hope for better things too. Though ye mayna be sae stout through the winter, when the warm weather comes in ye'll gather strength again; an', if ance ye had yer fit on a May-gowan, ye'll be as hale an' hearty as the best o' us."

"It's lang to the month o' May," said Margaret, in a voice unwontedly solemn; "an', afore that time come round, hundreds that are laughin an' makin muckle sport the night may be cauld in their graves. But promise, if I'm taen awa, that ye'll do your best to supply my place, an' to bring the twa thegither if ye can."

Nelly was really distressed to think that this gloomy presentiment had taken such firm hold of her neighbour's mind; but, fancying that it had been in some measure suggested by their former conversation, and hoping that it would soon pass off, she promised to comply with her wishes, and then urged her to rejoin the company within.

They accordingly went into the house, where they found the little party—which, in their absence, consisted of only three—engaged in a cheerful conversation. Freed at length from that embarrassment which they had experienced while alone, the others soon recovered their spirits and their freedom of speech. Margaret, however, could not so easily recover her former cheerfulness. She strove indeed to appear as merry as the rest; but her late indisposition, though only of a momentary nature, seemed to have left an effect upon her spirits which did not immediately pass away. There was also a something in the fitfulness of her manner, and the expression of deep solemnity into which her countenance frequently relapsed after a laugh, which told too plainly that her merriment came not from the heart. These symptoms were soon observed, and by degrees her sadness appeared to communicate itself to the rest of the company.

In this state of things, they seemed to feel as if an early separation would have been a relief, and almost the only relief of which the case would admit. When the propriety of a measure is felt by a whole company, some one or other of their number in general stammers upon the wishes of the rest; and here, shortly after the above-mentioned feeling had begun to prevail, Margaret Crawford said that—"As the night was dark and might end in rain, she thought it would be best for her an' Sandy to gang hame afore it was late." To this proposal Nelly and her husband made a friendly show of resistance, such as is common on these occasions, and urged, as reasons for delaying their guests, that "it was not late yet," and that "they would be hame in braw time, though they stayed anither hour." But this resistance, though reiterated, was so faint that it was at once felt to be formal; and Margaret, who had no very great temptation to do otherwise, seemed inclined to adhere to her first intention. She therefore repeated her reasons for going home; and, at the same time, expressed a hope, "if *naething extrordinar* cam i' the way, that she would see John an' Nelly, and Jenny too, at Gairyburn, some night neist week, to spend the e'enin wi' her"—after which, the little company broke up.

The night was far advanced before Jenny could close her eyes; and when at last she did sink into the arms of the "leaden god," it was only to dream of having lost her way, along with Sandy Crawford, in some wide and wildering desert which she had never seen before. At first, the scene seemed solitary, shaded with lofty yews, and tangled with trailing shrubs; dark clouds spread a gloom over it; mists rested on the top of every rock; and the night-dews hung heavily from every branch and every blade of grass. Then the prospect appeared to brighten: the landscape assumed a variety of charms; every hour disclosed some new beauty, or opened up some glowing vista which she had not before seen. The sun gradually dissipated the clouds which hitherto had concealed him, and, bursting through, dried up the superfluous moisture from the earth; the air became pure, and the day delightfully warm; and, though as yet she had discovered no road by which she could return, she did not feel greatly perplexed. But the pleasing prospect was soon overcast: clouds appeared to gather round them; anon she was separated from her companion by rocks and unfathomable gulfs, the nature and extent of which she could not distinctly see. At times she fancied he was lost, and felt inclined to weep at the thought that she should never see him more; then she obtained a glimpse of him, as if he still waited for her, and then her heart panted to come up with him; then he disappeared, and she knew not which way to turn. At last she thought Betsy Braikens came up to her, and offered to conduct her to where he was; but at that moment the sky grew dark, and the storm raged so terribly that she could not stir a step to follow her. It soon ceased, however; the day again cleared; she seemed to see him advancing to meet her, with a smile of welcome upon his countenance; and, just as he was about to throw his arms around her waist, she started aside to avoid his embrace, struck her arm upon the post of the bed, and the pain which the circumstance occasioned, aided by an importunate knocking at the door, awakened her. On being thus made aware that some one wanted ad-

mittance, she started up, threw on a part of her clothes, snatched up the poker, broke the *gathering-coal*, and stirred the fire, which instantly burst forth in a blaze; and then she hastened to open the door.

The present visiter was Sandy Crawford, in most respects the very same as she had seen him in her dream; but the *smile* with which that illusion had presented her, was wanting, and in its stead she thought she could discover, by the light of the fire, marks of anxiety, perturbation, and fear, upon his countenance. The contrast was so striking, that she almost forgot one part of it was only a dream. At the very first glance, she felt certain that something was wrong; and she would have inquired what it was, but, before she could speak, he told her, in terms which betrayed his own agitation, that his mother, without having previously complained of being worse than her ordinary, had been struck with what appeared to be *palsy*, in the course of the night; that she was now wholly deprived of speech, and nearly deprived of motion in one side, and that he had hastened thither as soon as she could be left, to beg either her or her mother to come over and watch her till he could procure further assistance. He would have said something more—he would have hinted the probability of the fatal termination of his mother's disease, and the further probability that this termination might occur in a few hours, both of which were painfully impressed upon his heart; but he shrank from the idea of speaking on such a subject, as though he apprehended some mysterious connection between his own words and the fate of his mother, and that what he was about to say might hurry on the crisis which he wished to avert. He was therefore silent; while Jenny, between the effects of her dream, and the alarming intelligence which she had just heard, knew not what to answer, or what she should do. In general, she possessed activity, and all that was necessary to enable her to render assistance in any case with which she was acquainted; but she was susceptible of strong impressions—those who are so seldom act with ease in an untried situation—and she was now placed in one which was perfectly new to her. In her agitation, she would have stood where she was, like a statue, or she would have accompanied him without taking time to put on what remained of her clothes, had he repeated his request; but her mother, who had been awakened by the opening of the door, on overhearing the conversation which followed, had dressed herself with characteristic despatch, and now came to her daughter's relief.

"Dinna forget to milk the cow, lassie?" said she, "nor to mak yer father's parritch about eight o'clock, an' I'll rin owre mysel, an' see what's the matter wi' puir Margaret Crawford. But, if I'm no back afore dinner-time, mind ye to come an' see how she is." With these brief orders, Nelly wrapped herself up in her cloak, and hastened to carry her services where they were most wanted.

On reaching Gairyburn, they found Margaret, as she had been represented, very ill. The shock, however, did not, as there was at first some reason to fear, prove immediately mortal; and, about noon, when Jenny arrived, her mother proposed that she herself should go home, leaving her in constant attendance, and promising, at the same time, to return as often as possible, and give them all the assistance in her power. This arrangement appeared satisfactory to all parties; but, at the end of three weeks, a second shock brought rest to the sufferer, and mourning to the house of Gairyburn.

This mournful event, as is common in such cases, brought together the whole of the friends and relations of the deceased; and among the rest came Betsy Braikens and her brother. Betsy had been for some time past residing with that brother in Perth; but, as soon as it was known that she had arrived, those who pretended to take an interest in the affairs of her cousin hastened to represent to her in the strongest terms the necessity of her coming "to *keep his house*;" and, yielding to their representations, she did offer her services. These were declined, however, from the consideration that it would be inconvenient for her brother to want her assistance. But, as soon as it was understood that she had made such an offer, the very individuals who had advised her to make it began to search for other motives than their own advice, and they soon discovered what they considered a sufficient reason for her doing so, in the embarrassed circumstances of her brother. It was generally believed that his trade had never been very flourishing, and some surmises had lately reached them, of the failure of a merchant in Glasgow, with whom he was understood to be connected, which would involve him in very considerable pecuniary difficulties. Putting these things together, they deemed them a sufficient warrant for supposing that Betsy had her cousin's *hand* as well as his house in view, and that, if she did not succeed in securing one of them at least, she might soon have no house to keep.

This supposition was not altogether without a foundation; for all his endeavours had been so unsuccessful of late, that her brother had now come to the determination of dropping business, as soon as he could sell off his stock, and wind up his affairs; but, as it would be several months before this could be done with any prospect of advantage, he still continued to keep his intentions a perfect secret. And this being the case, it was agreed, on the evening of the funeral, that he and his sister should set off, early next morning, for Perth.

The weather, however, did not appear to favour their intentions. For the last eight days, it had been fair, and uncommonly mild, with slight frosts during the night, so that, in the estimation of the country people, "the earth was prepared for a storm." But, on the day alluded to, the atmosphere had become loaded with stagnant vapours; a continuous mass of dark, leaden-coloured cloud, which seemed to rest upon the nearest hills, arched the concave; not a single speck of blue sky had been visible since morning; and in the evening, one of those dense and wildering falls of snow, which have frequently misled the traveller, came on.

The night was one which, in most respects, seemed to accord with the sorrowful feelings of the little party at Gairyburn. It was gloomy and silent; while the snow continued to accumulate around the house, as if to exclude everything which might have a tendency to disturb their recollections of the solemn scene in which they had been so lately engaged. At times, a sort of conversation, carried on in subdued tones, prevailed for a season; and then it was followed by considerable intervals of silence, broken only by an occasional sigh, a casual observation on the stillness of the night, or an injunction to stir the fire. Anon, the colloquial powers of the party seemed to gather strength from the repose which they had been permitted to enjoy; and the discourse was again renewed, to continue for a season, and then to flag, as it had done before. In most respects, this conversation bore a striking resemblance to the evening fire of the poor widow, which is only kept alive by an occasional handful of brushwood thrown upon the expiring embers; after which, it emits a flickering flame, for a short while, and then gradually decays, till the last spark is scarcely perceptible, and it is only prevented from utter extinction by a repetition of the same process.

In one of these intervals of silence, Betsy Braikens had gone to the door—partly to pass the time which hung so heavily, and partly to see if there was any prospect of being able to travel in the morning. While thus reconnoitring, her attention was attracted by a whistle, followed by a faint cry for assistance, which, though evidently at a

distance, was, owing to the stillness of the night, distinctly heard. This made her listen more attentively. The whistle and the cry were repeated, which satisfied her that they proceeded from some one in distress; and she now thought it time to give notice of what she had heard to those within. On hearing the circumstance, her brother and cousin immediately set off in the direction which she had pointed out; and, in a short time, they returned, bringing along with them a stranger, who had lost his way when it grew dark; and, after having wandered for several hours among the hills, without knowing where he was going, had, at last, stumbled over a bank into a miry slough, where, as he was unable to extricate himself from the mud, he would, in all probability, have perished, but for the assistance which he had received.

The care of ministering to the new guest devolved principally upon Betsy Braikens, who had been the first to give notice of his previous distress; and for such an office she was better qualified than any other female who, at the time, could have been found within several miles—both from that knowledge of the conventionalities of society which she had acquired during her residence in Perth, and from a disposition which was naturally kind. With that alacrity which is common to her sex, she made the necessary preparations for enabling him to shift such parts of his clothes as were wet. A repast, calculated to refresh him after the fatigues of his journey, was next provided; and, as there was no inn or other place of accommodation within reach, and the night was one in which no stranger could find his way, she represented the necessity of his remaining where he was till morning; and then he might travel with her and her brother, if he chanced to be journeying in that direction; and, if his road was different, he would, at least, have the advantage of daylight to direct his steps.

To this proposal the stranger did not seem to be averse. In such circumstances, men are often more grateful for a mere trifle than, in others, they would be for the greatest favours. He seemed highly sensible of the kindness with which he was treated, and soon began to regard his entertainers with a feeling of respect. Upon further conversation, it was discovered that his name was Robert Walker—that he was the son of the Glasgow merchant whose failure has been already noticed as having been prejudicial to the interests of James Braikens; and, on learning that he was in the society of one who had been in the habit of dealing with his father, he proceeded to give them a brief sketch of his story.

After his prospects had been obscured by the bankruptcy of his father, he had succeeded in procuring for himself a situation in Aberdeen; and, as he was a good pedestrian—and had, moreover, a liking for rural scenery, rural manners, and unfrequented roads—these considerations, backed by motives of economy, had induced him to undertake the journey on foot. He had, accordingly, proceeded by Kinross, intending to make his line as straight as possible, without paying much attention to the highways; and, on reaching the village of Strathmiglo, he had been directed across a part of the Ochils, as the nearest road to Newburgh—at which part he intended to cross the Tay. He had taken these directions and pushed forward, in the expectation that he would reach the last-mentioned place before it was late; but—the snow coming on—he soon lost all traces of the road; and, what was worse, he soon after lost everything like an idea of what direction he was travelling in. He had, however, no alternative but to proceed. Exertion was indispensable to prevent his limbs from being benumbed with cold; but the dense fall of snow prevented him from seeing any distant object upon which he might direct his course, and thus arrive at some place of shelter. In this state of uncertainty he had wandered he neither knew where nor how long, when—stumbling over the bank, as already noticed, and being unable to extricate himself—he was beginning to fear that he had reached the end of his journey before his deliverers reached him.

On the following morning, which was fair, though the clouds still appeared to be far from having discharged the whole of their contents, the stranger was easily induced to accompany Betsy Braikens and her brother to Perth—alleging, as his reason for doing so, a wish to see the town, and the possibility of his being there able to procure some mode of conveying himself to Aberdeen, less laborious than travelling had now become. They accordingly set forward together; but, before they had reached the head of Abernethy Glen, the snow again began to fall, accompanied by gusts of wind which whirled whole wreaths into the air at once, and drove the dazzling particles before them with such violence that suffocation seemed to be the inevitable consequence of being long exposed to the fury of the storm. In a short time the snow had accumulated to such a depth in the hollows as to render travelling a most laborious operation; and it was with some difficulty that the party reached the domicile of Andrew Braikens, where they thought it best to take shelter for the present, and postpone their farther journey till the weather should be more favourable. The storm continued for nearly forty-eight hours without intermission, so that, dating from the time at which they set out, it was not till the evening of the third day that they reached Perth.

Whatever loss, in the way of business, this delay might have occasioned, the merchant found, on his arrival, that it was only his absence which had saved him from being declared bankrupt, and, in all probability, imprisoned for debt, at the same time. But, on the previous day, one of his most clamorous creditors had been suddenly taken ill. A temporary respite was thus obtained; and, with the assistance of Robert Walker, who exerted all his oratorical powers in his behalf, matters were again patched up, and he was allowed to go on with the concerns of his shop, as before. These things being settled, this new friend strenuously advised him to retain his business if possible, assuring him, at the same time, that there was nothing like perseverance, and then went on his way, whither we follow him not.

At Gairyburn, things went on much in the same way as they had done before, except that the management of the house was now committed to the care of a servant girl. But some circumstances soon transpired which led the people around to suppose that that girl might, in due time, be promoted to be mistress of what at present she only managed for another. Sandy Crawford had bought rather a better suit of mournings for Jenny Jervis than it was common to give to a servant; and this, along with a number of other incidents and occurrences, too minute to be enumerated here, but not so minute as to escape the notice of a country population, was made the subject of discussion at the firesides of the neighbouring cottages. But, as neither men nor women, since the world began, were ever known to agree about either religion or politics, or any other important matter whatever, so here there was a difference of opinion, and many were the conferences and disputes which ensued With one party, the buying of the gown and the other corroborating circumstances, were deemed incontestable evidence; and they affirmed, that Sandy and Jenny only waited till the proper season for laying aside their mournings to be married. In this marriage they saw, or at least fancied they could see, such a number of advantages as would render it most desirable. "Jenny," they said, "was a thrifty lassie, an' wad mak a guid wife. She kenned a' about the management o' the kye, an' she wad aye hae her mither at hand to apply to in ony strait." Another party differed from them entirely, both as to the conclusiveness of the evidence, and the advantages to be

derived from the marriage. 'The buying of the gown," they maintained, "was nothing: Jenny Jervis was a young, thoughtless lassie, wha wad be soon enough married four or five years hence; and they were sure Sandy wad be far better with his cousin Betsy, wha was baith a weel-faured and a weel-conditioned cummer, an' had some experience in the management o' a house." They said, farther, that "Betsy, they were sure, wad be the woman; for Sandy was a thoughtfu callant; an', though he might be led awa, for a time. wi' twa blue een, a slender waist, an' the red an' white on a lassie's face, he wad soon come to see that ither things were needfu to a man fechtin for his bread, an' strugglin for the rent o' a farm." A third party presumed to differ from both of these in every particular save one. They admitted, indeed, that Sandy "was a thoughtfu callant;" but, from that very admission, they drew a quite contrary conclusion. "Baith Betsy an' Jenny," they averred, "might remain *single* lang enough for him; an', if ever he took a wife ava, they were sure it wadna be in ony hurry." They also pointed out several advantages which were likely to accrue to him from adopting this theory, and several disadvantages which would infallibly result from his adoption of any other. "The place," they said, "was but sma', an' the rent high; an', as lang as he had only a servant, he had naething but her bit year's wage to pay at the term. But, were he to tak a wife, he wad hae to get new beds, an' new chairs, an' a hantle whigmaleeries forby, that wad cost him nae little siller—he wad hae to buy *fykes* to her in ilka market, an' in ilka shop he came past—not to mention bairns' meat an' bairns' claes—mair o' baith, maybe, than the place wad afford." Thus, as the great political world is at present divided into Tories, Whigs, and Radicals, this little sequestered district was divided into parties, which, for the sake of distinction, we shall denominate *Jervisines, Braikenites,* and *Malthusians.*

Though Betsy Braikens had not been at Gairyburn for several years before the death of her aunt, after that occurrence she continued to pay occasional visits there; and it was observed, by those who knew and could interpret the signs of the times, that her cousin always looked more thoughtful for a day or two after she went away, than was his usual. This seemed to favour the theory of the *Jervisines,* who said that he was pestered with her visits, and did not know how to get quit of her. The *Braikenites,* on the other hand, maintained, that, if he did not give her some encouragement, she would not return so often, and that his thoughtful looks were occasioned by regret at her absence.

Several months after the death of Margaret Crawford, and just as the first party were beginning to be certain that their theory was the correct one, and that they would, ere long, obtain a notable victory over their opponents, both Betsy and her brother paid a visit to Gairyburn. They stayed a night and a day with their cousin; and, after they had taken their departure, it was observed that he looked more thoughtful than he had done on any former occasion, with the additional aggravation of his thoughtfulness not passing away in a day or two, as it had done before. At the end of a fortnight, the neighbours said to each other—"Preserve us a' I saw ye ever sic an alteration as has come owre Sandy Crawford! He's surely seen something that's no canny, an' daurna speak about it." At the end of a month, they might have made the same observation; but, by that time, they had become accustomed to the change, and they only said—"Puir fellow!—he's as sair altered as though that cummer frae Perth had ta'en awa his last penny."

He was indeed changed, though not to the extent which they seemed to suppose. He managed the whole of his concerns as he had done before; in company or conversation there was little perceptible difference; but, when silent or alone, there was frequently an expression of resignation on his countenance, as if some misfortune were impending which he could not avert, and which, if it should fall, he had determined to endure with patience. Strict observations were now made on his conduct towards Jenny; and here too an alteration was discovered, though that alteration did not seem to admit of being explicitly expressed in words. It was agreed, however, by the wise women who had made the observations, that he appeared like one who had determined never again to urge his suit, and that he had certainly made up his mind to see her give her hand to another. This conclusion was favourable to the Malthusians: they repeated their assertion, that "he was a thoughtfu callant, and that he had determined not to marry at all;" while the others, if they did not "hide their diminished heads," were at least compelled to hold their peace.

But of all who were puzzled by the mysterious change in the manners of the should-be-bridegroom, none were more so than poor Jenny herself, who really loved him, and who had been led to suppose that he loved her in return, though hitherto he had never directly declared his intention of marrying her. Her mother was equally puzzled to assign a satisfactory reason for the change; but she was not equally affected by it. In her younger years, she had learned, from experience, that there is nothing more mutable than the heart of a lover; and she fancied, even in ordinary cases, that it was only by practising a great deal of art and finesse that a husband could be secured. This, in her estimation, being the case, she determined that—if the experience which she had acquired in these matters could be rendered available—her daughter should not remain so long unmarried as she had done herself; and she immediately set her head to work to contrive the means of bringing about a marriage as speedily as possible. Nelly recollected some years ago having had a young *pig,* which could not be prevailed upon to take its victuals. She had tried to feed it, or, in other words, to thrust meat into its mouth, in the hope that it would then swallow it; but this only served to make it more obdurate in its resistance. It seemed determined to starve itself to death, and she knew not what to make of it. Her husband, however, bethought him of a scheme which proved successful: on the following day, he brought home another, which was put in beside its refractory kinsman, and afterwards, when she came with the victuals, they immediately commenced fighting about their respective shares. It was then *who should get most;* and each would have eaten up the whole, if its skin would have contained as much. The bee is said to gather honey from every flower, and there are some people who will learn something from every incident. Nelly instantly discovered a strong analogy between the case of the single *pig* and its victuals, and the case of a young woman with a single sweetheart; and having discovered an analogy in the cases, she felt certain that there must also be an analogy in the cures. The present emergency seemed to be a most favourable opportunity for trying the correctness of this theory by that best of all possible tests—an experiment; and she forthwith resolved, were the thing practicable, that Jenny should have a new sweetheart, if peradventure his presence would produce a favourable revolution in the sentiments of the old one.

Measures were accordingly adopted, and the most feasible schemes were laid—schemes which, with proper management, could hardly have failed of success. Jenny, also, received such hints and instructions as were deemed necessary to enable her to act her part. But Jenny was, as her mother phrased it, "an even-forrit, silly, simple lassie;" and in her hands nothing succeeded. It was with the utmost difficulty that she could be brought to give the slightest encouragement to a new lover, and if at any time

she did muster sufficient resolution to smile upon a rival in the presence of Sandy Crawford, her eye immediately turned upon the latter, to see if he approved of what she had done; and when, in his guarded look, she could read neither approbation nor disapprobation, a deep sigh commonly revealed her apprehensions for having done wrong. The preposterousness of such conduct needs no remark; its evident tendency was, to keep him free from the slightest suspicions of having a competitor for her hand, and the most distant idea that he was in any danger of losing her —and all this in the midst of schemes intended to produce a contrary effect!

It is probable that other schemes might have been devised, or the same ones might have been prosecuted to a still greater extent; but what had been already done, aided by his own observation, had opened his eyes to some things of which he was not before fully aware. Hitherto, he seemed to have supposed that he was himself the only sufferer; but he now discovered that there was another whom he was making unhappy, and her unhappiness evidently pained him, adding, at the same time, to his other causes of anxiety, whatever they were, and consequently to the thoughtfulness of his looks. But, still he seemed to fear coming to an explanation, as much as if he had been certain that such a step would destroy his last remains of hope. He could not, however, long endure such an idea; and adopting what had become the least painful alternative, he seemed to have made up his mind to the unfolding of that secret which, hitherto, he had kept to himself.

"Jenny," said he, one day, after a long and thoughtful silence, "for some months I have scarcely known what it was to be happy for a single hour; and, strange as ye may think it, *love* has been one of the principal causes of my misery. Had it not been for *that*, I could have thought lightly of poverty and everything else. I have acted foolishly perhaps, and made myself altogether unworthy of the woman whom I love; but, yet, I would fain hope that she will not despise me, and I am now resolved"——

At hearing these words, Jenny's heart had begun to palpitate violently. But, just as he uttered the word "*resolved*," a rap was heard at the door; and, on its being opened, Betsy Braikens came in, and saluted her cousin with a profusion of smiles; while poor Jenny, to conceal her own agitation, was glad to make an excuse for leaving the house.

As soon as Betsy's coming was known, people were on the alert. On Sabbath she accompanied her cousin to the church, and, on the road thither, it was observed that the thoughtful expression of his countenance had passed away—that, after making the proper allowance for the solemnity of the day, he was to all appearance as cheerful as ever he had been in his life; and that he behaved to his relation with the greatest kindness, accompanied by an easiness of manner for which the wise women could only account by supposing that a still nearer relationship was in contemplation, or, in other words, that the marriage day was already set. The star of the *Braikenites* was now in the ascendant; they began to feel certain that their opinions had all along been correct; and they upbraided their opponents for their slowness of belief, and their backwardness to place implicit confidence in the understanding of those who were evidently wiser than themselves.

The Tuesday following was that on which *Auchtermuchty Market* occurred. Betsy remained till that important day; went to the market with her cousin like a betrothed damsel; while Jenny, who had also been invited to accompany him, preferred staying at home; and, to place the matter beyond further dispute, he bought and presented the former with a gown, so fine and so costly that those who had seen it declared "there wasna anither like it selled that day i' the town." No man, it was affirmed, would thus throw away money in buying gowns, unless he expected to be benefited by the wearer—and the triumph of the Braikenites was now almost complete.

While these important events were passing, it was not to be expected that Jenny should remain an unconcerned spectator. She had been the first to notice that remarkable change for the better which his cousin's presence had produced in the looks and manners of Sandy Crawford. She saw his cheerfulness restored—she saw his kindness to Betsy; and, for the first time in her life, she believed that he *really* loved her.

On the day after the market, Betsy Braikens was to go home, and her cousin gallantly offered to accompany her as far as her father's. Shortly after they were gone, Jenny hastened to tell her mother what she had seen and heard. Nelly now considered that her own character for prudence and management was at stake; and Jenny was prevailed upon to adopt her views, and to promise to be directed by her advice.

In the evening, when Sandy Crawford returned from escorting his cousin, he was in high spirits, it was also evident that he had drunk a *glass* or two more than was his usual, though not so much as to injure his understanding; and he now appeared most anxious to obtain a private conference with Jenny. Between her and the *herd laddie* a sort of tacit understanding appeared now to exist, for he did not leave the house to follow his pastime, as was his wont; and, when his master bade him "gang an' clean out his byre," the boy told him that he had done so already. He next desired him to "bring some water from the well for a drink, as he was thirsty." But Jenny, who answered for him, said that, "as the cow had been *tigging* in the afternoon, he would be tired with chasing her;" and she took the pitcher and went to obey the order herself. The individual who had given it followed her out; but she was at the well, and had filled her pitcher, before he could come near enough to speak. When he had almost come up with her, he repeated her name, in that low, earnest tone, which people sometimes use when they wish to draw the attention of a listener; but she either did not hear, or did not *wish* to hear him. He made certain of meeting her, however, as she returned; but here also he was deceived, for she went round by the other side of the *kailyard*, for the purpose, as it appeared, of taking with her a handful of sticks, with which to kindle up the fire next morning. On seeing this manœuvre, he jumped over the dike, repeating her name as he had done before; but, on the present, as on the former occasion, she either heard him not, or pretended not to hear him; and, by hastening her pace, she had reached the house door before he could intercept her. As a *dernier* resource, the last mentioned personage was now ordered to "gang and water the horse." And he rose to obey; but, here again, Jenny seemed to sympathise with him in his labours. "As the cow had *tiggit* i' the afternoon," she said, "it was like enough the horse might rin awa i' the e'enin; and, as the laddie, puir thing, had chased the cow till he was ready to fa' down, it couldna be expeckit that he would be able to chase the horse, an' sae she would gang an' help him."

If ever Jenny Jervis had been puzzled to account for the conduct of Sandy Crawford, he was now as much puzzled to account for the change which had come over her. He thought of the subject without being able to come to any conclusion, and then thought of it again to as little purpose as he had done before, till at last, wearied out with vain conjectures, he flung himself upon his bed, in a state of mind not easy to be described; and when Jenny, who was in no great haste to return, came in, his heavy breathing told that he was already asleep. On stealing a glance into the

apartment where he was, she saw that he was still lying with his clothes on, and that his sleep was that of a profound sort which commonly lasts for the night.

Sandy Crawford had fallen asleep, little dreaming of either alarm or danger; but, about midnight, he was disturbed by an indistinct and inarticulate sound, which, though it conveyed no meaning to his ear, was loud enough to awake him. Slowly and heavily he opened his eyes; but it was not dark, as he expected it to be. On the contrary, a strange light glimmered around him, and, on turning his head to see whence it proceeded, he saw, in the middle of the floor, a spectre, which might have well appalled the heart of a hero. The Ghost of Howdycraigs, to which his present visiter bore a striking resemblance, rushed back upon his memory, and he would have trembled, but that he did not recollect any bad consequences which followed that memorable event. Thus, in time, even ghosts might fail to terrify, were they to repeat their visits too often. In the present instance it were difficult to say if Sandy was not strengthened for the sight by some faint hope that this might be a second marriage-making expedition of the same benevolent spirit, and. that it might eventually help him to a *wife*, the getting of which thing he had begun to regard as no easy matter.

The ghost of Gairyburn, however, at first bade fair for being as famous in its day and generation, as the ghost of Howdycraigs had been; and doubtless it had succeeded in a less hazardous enterprise. Like the other, its head was tied up in a white handkerchief, its body was carefully wrapped in the folds of an ample windingsheet. On its feet it wore white stockings, but no shoes—the absence of which exhibited a finely turned ankle, to such advantage that any male onlooker might have been excused for wishing it a substantial woman. But then its face and hands were as white as the finest flour or the whitest chalk could have made them—thus setting every earthly feeling, except fear, at defiance. In one hand it carried a candle, which burned as blue as any spiritual light ever burned, while with the other it managed its apparel, which was scrupulously clean—thus making it appear that it had been washed since it left its subterranean abode, from which circumstance it were reasonable to infer that it was either a female ghost, or had got a wife to do these things for it.

Though we have thus detained the reader, by describing it, *it* detained not its auditor; for, as soon as he appeared to be fully awake—"Sandy Crawford," it said. But it was evidently an apprentice in the task it had undertaken, and knew but little of the manner in which a message should be delivered; for here its voice faltered, and its hands trembled in a most curious manner—thus making it evident that ghosts have feelings as well as mortals, and that they may sometimes be sent upon errands they dislike. The shaking of its hands caused the blue flame to fall from the candle, which immediately burned out with a clear and natural light; while that which had fallen hissed and sputtered on the floor. In attempting to remedy this mistake, by restoring the blue flame to its proper place, it seemed to burn its fingers—at least it drew back its hand, with the appearance of pain, drawing in its breath, and starting up rather hurriedly at the same time. While performing the last mentioned of these operations, it unfortunately struck its head against the back of a chair, which chanced to be standing near, and ruffled its head dress, from under which a most enchanting ringlet of fair hair escaped, and began to play about its white temples. One mistake followed another—in attempting to replace the hair, it passed a portion of the windingsheet, in which it was muffled up, over its face; and when it was removed, its lips were no longer pale, but provokingly red—one cheek was of the same hue, and the deep blush of the other was now beginning to shine through its treacherous covering. As a further proof of its inexperience, it heaved a deep sigh, and was about to retire in apparent confusion, when Sandy, who had overcome his fear so far as to look at it steadily for the last minute or two, started up, with a heroism which has seldom been equalled, and, endeavouring to catch it in his arms, he exclaimed—

"Jenny, ye daft limmer, what set ye to playin thae mad pranks at this time o' night?"

In this emergency the ghost, confused as it was, contrived to make its escape; but not before it had thrown the windingsheet which it wore, around the very woman for whom he had mistaken it. By some "cantrip slight," it had no doubt brought her there to be ready in case of accidents, and it now left her to be caught in its stead. Jenny not being a ghost could not escape so easily; and, though she struggled a little when she found herself in the arms of a man, she did not appear extremely anxious to get away, while Sandy was so much pleased at having got her by herself at last that he soon forgot the terrors of the ghost.

"Jenny," he continued, still mistaking her for his spiritual visiter, "if I hadna *liket* ye better than every ither livin creatur, since ye was a lassie, I declare I would never kenn'd ye dressed up as ye are in a' that trumpery. But noo that I've gotten ye, I maun keep ye, for I've been wishing to tell ye something this lang time; but ye aye ran frae me as if I had been a *ghost*, though ye see I've catched you when ye was tryin to act ane."

The candle which the ghost had left was now placed in a candlestick; and as Jenny appeared perfectly willing to listen to whatever he might have to say, he proceeded to give her such information as served in a great measure to clear up the whole of the mystery.

Though he had been long attached to her, and had felt a growing inclination to call her his wife, his mother's death had prevented him from speaking of the subject for a time. During this interval, Betsy Braikens had come oftener than once, soliciting assistance for her brother; upon these occasions, he had always given her what ready money he could command, and, at last, to save him from bankruptcy, he had become security for a hundred pounds, which was considerably more than his whole effects were worth. No sooner had he done this than he began to doubt the possibility of his cousin ever being able to redeem his debts, in which case his own prospects were ruined. The idea that it would be criminal to involve an unsuspecting female in misery and poverty made him resolve to say nothing of his affections, till he should see what was to be the issue; and for a time he had kept his resolution. But he had determined to make a candid confession of his circumstances, and run any risk which she might be willing to share, when he was interrupted by Betsy Braikens, who had come expressly for the purpose of telling him that her brother had redeemed the whole of his debts and was now in prosperous circumstances. In a few days thereafter, Jenny went to reside with her mother for a short time; and one evening, as Sandy bade her good night, he gave her a clap on the shoulder, and called her his "spectre bride." On the following week, they went to Perth; and Jenny Jervis and Betsy Braikens were married on the same day—the former to Sandy Crawford, and the latter to Robert Walker, who had kept up a regular correspondence with her ever since the night on which he lost his way among the snow.

HOGMANAY; OR, THE LADY OF BALLOCHGRAY.

The last fifty years of mortal regeneration and improvement have effected more changes on the old fasts, and feasts, and merrymakings of Scotland, than twice and twice over that time of any other period since it became a nation. Every year we see the good old customs dying out, or strangled by the Protæan imp Fashion, who, in the grand march of improvement of which we are so proud, in the perking conceit of heirs-apparent of the millenium, seems to be the only creature that derives benefit from the eternal changes that, by-and-by, we fear, will turn our heads, and make us (though not like Lot's wife) look *back* for the true period of happiness and wisdom. But what enrageth us the more is, that, while all our fun of Beltane, Halloween, Hogmanay, Hanselmonday, and all our old merrymakings, are gone with our absentee lords and thanes—

> "Wha will their tenants pyke and squeize,
> And purse up all their rent;
> Syne wallop it to far courts, and bleize
> Till riggs and schaws are spent"—

and to whose contempt of our old customs we attribute a great part of their decay—we, in the very midst of the glorious improvement that has succeeded, are still cheated, belied, robbed, and plundered on all hands by political adventurers, private jobbers, and saintly hypocrites, in an artful, clean-fingered, and beautiful style of the trade, a thousand times more provoking than the clumsy, old-fashioned, *honest* kind of roguery that used to be in fashion, when folk were not too large for innocent mirth, and not too wise for enjoying what was liked by their ancestors. The people cry improvement—so do we; but we cherish a theory that has no charm, in these days of absolute faith in politics and parliament for the regeneration of man, that the true good of society—that is, the improvement of the heart and morals of a great country—lies in a sphere far humbler than the gorgeous recesses of Westminister—the fireside; a place that, in former days, was revered, and honoured, and cherished, not only as the cradle of morals, but the abode of soul-stirring joys, and the scene of the celebration of many old and sacred amusements which humanized the young heart, and moulded and prepared it for the reception of those feelings which are interwoven with the very principle of social good. A political wrangle is a poor substitute for the old moral tales of the winter evenings of old Scotland. Even our legends of superstitious fear carried in them the boon of heartfelt obligation, which, when the subject was changed for the duties of life, still retained its strength, and wrought for good. These things are all gone; and, dissatisfied as we are with the bold substitutes of modern wisdom, let us use that which they cannot take from us, our books of "auld lear," and refresh ourselves with a peep at Leslie, in the Hogmanay of 16—. Who has not heard of "Christ's Kirk" in the kingdom of Fife, that place so celebrated by King James, in his incomparable "Christ's Kirk on the Green," for the frolics of wooers and "kittys washen clean," and "damsels bright," and "maidens mild?" That celebrated town was no other than our modern Leslie; and, though we cannot say that that once favoured haunt of the satyrs of merrymaking has escaped the dull blight that comes from the sleepy eye of the owl of modern wisdom, we have good authority for asserting that long after James celebrated the place for its unrivalled festivities, the character of the inhabitants was kept for many an after-day; and Hogmanay was a choice outlet for the exuberant spirits of the votaries of Momus.

The day we find chronicled as remarkable for an exhibition of the true spirit of the Leslieans, went off as all days that precede a glorious jubilee at night generally do. The ordinary work of the "yape" expectants was, no doubt, apparently going on; but the looking of "twa ways" for gloaming was, necessarily, exclusive of much interest in the work of the day. The sober matrons, as they sat at the door on the "stane settle," little inclined to work, considered themselves entitled to a *feast* of gossip; and even the guidman did not feel himself entitled to curb the glib tongue of his dame, or close up her ears with prudential maxims against the bad effects of darling, heart-stirring, soul-inspiring scandal. On that day there was no excise of the commodities of characters. They might be bought or sold at a wanworth, or handed or banded about in any way that suited the tempers of the people. The bottle and the bicker had already, even in the forenoon, been, to a certain extent, employed as a kind of outscouts of the array that was to appear at night, and the gossipers were in that blessed state, between partial possession and full expectation, that makes every part of the body languid and lazy except the tongue. Around them the younkers, "hasty hensures" and "wanton winklots," were busy preparing the habiliments of the guysers—whose modes of masking and disguising were often regulated by the characters they were to assume, or the songs they had learned to chant for the occasion. Nor were these mimes limited to the urchin caste; for, in these days, wisdom had not got so conceited as to be ashamed of innocent mirth; and gaucy queens and stalwarth chiels exhibited their superiority only in acting a higher mask, and singing a loftier strain. The gossips did not hesitate to suspend the honeyed topic, to give sage counsel on the subject of the masking "bulziements;" and anon they turned a side look at the minor actors, the imps of devilry, who passed along with their smoking horns, often made of the stem or "runt" of a winter cabbage, wherewith that night they would inevitably smoke out of "house and hauld" every devil's lamb of every gossip that did not open her hand and "deal her bread" to the guysers. Both parties, gossips and urchins, understood each other—like two belligerent powers asserting mutual rights, and contemplating each other with that look of half-concealed contention and defiance, which only tended to make the attack more inevitable.

The evening set in, and the witching hour—the keystone of night's black arch, twelve o'clock—was approaching. To go to bed on such an occasion, would have been held no better than for a jolly toper to shirk his bicker, a lover to eschew the trysting thorn, or a warrior to fly the scene of his country's glory; neither would it have been safe, for no good guyser of the old school would take the excuse of being in bed in lieu of the buttered pease-bannock—the true

hogmanay cake, to which he was entitled, by "the auld use and wont" of Scotland; and far better breathe the smoke of the "smeikin horn" on foot, and with the means of self-defence at command, than lie choked in bed, and "deaved" by the stock and horn, the squalling bagpipe, and the eternal—

"Hery, Hary Hubblischow,
See ye not quha is come now!"

ringing in one's ears during the whole night. The young were out; the old were in; but all were equally up and doing the honours of the occasion. At auld Wat Webster's door, one minstrel company were singing—"Great is my sorrow;" and Marion, his daughter, with

"Her glitterand hair, that was sae gowden,"

dealt out, with leal hand, the guyser's bannock. At the very next door, Meg Johnston was in the act of being "smeeked oot" by a covey of twelve devils, who had inserted into every cranny a horn, and were blowing, with puffed cheeks, a choking death in every blast. One kept watch, to give the concerted signal when Meg should appear with her stick. On which occasion they were off in an instant; but only to return when Meg had let out the smoke, and satisfied herself that she would be no more tormented that night, to blow her up and out again, with greater vigour and a denser smoke than before. Farther on, Gib Dempster's dame, Kate, is at her door, with the bottle in her hand, to give another menyie of maskers their "hogmanay," in the form of a dram; and Gib is at her back, eyeing her with a squint, to count how many interlusive applications of the cordial she will make to her own throat before she renounce her *opportunity*. In the middle of the street, Gossip Simson is hurrying along, with the necessaries in her lap, to treat her "cusin," Christy Lowrie, with a bit and a drop; and ever and anon she says, "a guid e'en" to this one, and "a guid e'en" to that; and, between the parties, her head is ever thrown back, as if she were counting the stars; and, every time the act is repeated, the bottle undergoes a perceptible diminution of its contents, till, by the time she reaches her "luving cusin's" door, it is empty; and honest John Simson, at her return, greets her with—"My feth, Jenny, ye've been at mony a hoose in Christ's Kirk this nicht, if ane may judge by yer bottle.' At the same instant,

"Oh, leddy, help yer prisoncer
This last nicht o' the passing year,"

is struck up at the door; the stock and horn sounds lustily in the ears of her whose bottle is empty; and, obliged to send them away without either cake or sup, she hears sounding in her confused ears—

"The day will come when ye'll be dead,
An' ye'll neither care for meal nor bread;"

and, in a short time after, "Jamie the wight," an impking, with a tail of half-a-dozen minor and subordinate angels, begin blowing their smoking horns in at both door and window, till honest John is fairly smoked out, crying, as he hastens to the door—"This comes, Jenny, o' yer luvish kindness to yer cusins, that we hae naethin left in oor bottle, either to keep oot thae deevils' breath or wash't oot o' oor choking craigs." He is no sooner at the door than Geordie Jamieson accosts him in the usual style, and says he has come for his "hogmanay;" but John, knowing the state of the bottle, begins a loud cough, in the midst of the smoke, and cries, as he runs away from his house and visiter, (whom he pretends not to see for the smoke,) "It's a deevil o' a' hardship to be smeeked oot o' ane's ain hoose."

"Now," mutters Jenny, as she hears him run away, "I'll no see his face till mornin; an' he'll come in as blind's a bat." And out she flies to catch him; but, in her hurry, she overturns Geordie, just as his lips are manufacturing the ordinary "Guid een to ye, Jenny!"

"The same to ye, Geordie," says she; and, with that boon, leaves him on her flight.

The truth was, that John had the same instinctive antipathy against a house where there was an empty bottle as rats have against deserted granaries. But, if honest John Simson's house was deserted because Jenny had made too free with the bottle, Wat Webster's was full, from a reason precisely the very opposite; for the fair Marion —who had

"Brankit fast and made her bonny"—

was, in the midst of a company, distributing the cakes and bannocks with maidenly grace; and many a swain that night was glad, while

"He quhissilit and he pypit baith,
To mak her blyth that meeting—
My hony heart, how says the sang,
There sall be mirth at oor greeting."

And among the rest might now be seen John Simson and his helpmate, and also Meg Johnston, who had been—either in reality, or, at least, with semblance sufficient to form their apology for calling where there was plenty of drink—smoked out of their own houses, amidst the cheers of the fire-imps. About this time, twelve o'clock was chimed from a rough-voiced bell of the Franciscan Monastery; and, some time after, in came Christy Lowrie, puffing and blowing, as if she too had experienced the effects of the thick breath of the fire-imps; and it might have been a fair presumption that her throat, like that of some of her predecessors, had been dried from pre-perceived gusts of Wat Webster's whisky rather than the smoke of the fire angels, had it not been made quickly apparent, from other symptoms, that a horripilant terror had seized her heart and limbs, and inspired her tongue with the dry rattle of fearful intelligence. Never stopping till she got forward into the very heart of the company, seated round a blazing ingle, she sank upon a chair, and held up her hands to heaven, as if calling down from that quarter some supernatural agency to help in her difficulty. Every one turned and looked at her with wonder, mixed with sympathetic fear.

"What, in God's name, is this, Christy? Is he come?" cried Wat Webster.

"Oh! he's come again—he's come again!" she replied, in the midst of an effort to catch a spittle to wet her parched throat. "He's been at Will Pearson's, and Widow Lindsay's, and Rob Paterson's—he's gaun his auld rounds—and dootless he'll be here too. O Marion! Marion! gie me a spark to weet my throat."

The door was again opened, and in came Widow Lindsay in great haste and terror,

"I've seen him again!" cried she fearfully, and threw herself down on a corner of the lang settle.

"Are ye sure it's him, dame?" inquired Meg Johnston, who seemed perfectly to understand these extraordinary proceedings.

"Sure!" ejaculated the widow. "Hae I no tasted his *red whisky;* and has it no burned my throat till I maun ask Marion there to quench the fire wi' a spark o' human liquor?"

The fire in the two terror-struck women's throats was soon extinguished by the "spark" they demanded; and a conversation, composed of twenty voices at once, commenced, the essence of which was, that, on the occasion of the last Hogmanay, a man dressed in a peculiar manner, with a green doublet, and hose of the same colour, a cravat, and a blue bonnet, had, just as twelve o'clock pealed from the monastery clock, made his appearance in the town, and conducted himself in such a manner as to excite much wonder among the inhabitants. Everything about him was mysterious; no person in that quarter had ever seen him before; there was nobody along with him; he

came exactly at twelve; his face was so much shaded by a peculiar manner of wearing his bonnet and cravat that no one could say he had ever got a proper view of his features; he carried with him a bottle of liquor, which the people, from ignorance of its character, denominated *red whisky*, and which he distributed freely to all and sundry, without his stock ever running out, or being exhausted: his manners were free, boisterous, and hilarous; and he possessed the extraordinary power of making people love him *ad libitum*. He came as he went, without any one knowing more of him than that he was the very prince of good fellows; so exquisite a tosspot, that he seemed equal to the task (perhaps no difficult one) of making the whole town of Christ's Kirk drunk by the extraordinary spirit of his example; and so spirit-stirring a conjurer of odd thoughts and unrivalled humour, that melancholy itself laughed a gaunt laugh at his jokes; and gizzened gammers and giddy hizzies were equally delighted with his devilry and his drink. Arriving in the midst of frolic as high as ordinary mortal spirits might be supposed able to sublime human exultation, he effected such an increase of the corrybantic power of the laughing and singing genius of Hogmanay, that

"Never in Scotland had been seen
Sic dancing nor deray;
Nowther at Falkland on the green,
Nor Peebles at the play."

But, coming like a fire-flaught, like a fire-flaught he and his red whisky had departed; and it was not until he had gone, and one tosspot met another tosspot, and gossip another gossip, and compared notes, and exchanged shrewd guesses, eloquent winks, and pregnant vibrations of wondering noddles, that the mysterious stranger was invested with all the attributes to which he was, by virtue of his superhuman powers, so clearly entitled. He was immediately elevated to the place which, in those days, was reserved in every cranium for the throne of the genius of superstition; and he of the red cravat and red liquor was the never-ending subject of conversation, investigation, speculation, and consternation of the good folks of the town of Christ's Kirk. While the terror he had inspired was still fresh on the minds of the people, he returned at the exact hour of twelve on the subsequent Halloween. He brought again his bottle of red liquor, was dressed in the same style, wore the same red cravat, and was invested with the same sublimating powers of extravagant merriment. He went his old rounds; cracked nuts with the kittys; ducked for the apple, which never escaped his mouth; threw the weight in the barn; spaed fortunes with the Mauses; drank with the tosspots—

"If you can be blest the day,
Ne'er defer it till the morn—
Peril still attends delay;
As the fools will find, when they
Have their happy hour forborne;"

and, by means of his wild humour and exhilarating drink, set all the scene of his former exploits in an uproar of mixed terror, jollity, superstition, and amazement. Every one, not possessed of fear, scrutinized him; those (and they were many)who were stricken with terror, avoided him as if he had in reality been the gentleman in black, as indeed many at that time alleged he was; some who had heard of him, watched to catch a passing glimpse of him; but, wonderful as it may seem, the jolly stranger again disappeared, and no one, even those who had got royally drunk with him, could say aught more of him than was said on the prior occasion; viz., that he was the very prince of good fellows, if he should be the "very big-horned Deil himsel." On his second disappearance, the point was no longer a moot one, "Who the devil he could be?" for the very question, as put, decided the question before it was answered. The point was just as lucid as ever was the spring of St Anthony, and no one could be gravelled, where there was not a grain of sand to interrupt the vision. There was not in the limits of the guid toun a dame or damsel, greybeard, or no-beard, that possessed within the boundaries of their cerebral dominions a single peg on which they could hang a veritable or plausible doubt of the true character, origin, and destination of this twelve-o'clock visiter of the good old town of "Christ's Kirk on the Green."

Such was the state and condition of public opinion in the town of Leslie on this most important and engrossing subject, on the breaking of the day with which our history begins—this eventful Hogmanay. As the evening approached, every one trembled; but the inspiration of incipient drams had had the effect of so far throwing off the incubus as to enable some of the inhabitants, and, in particular, those we have mentioned, to go about the forms of the festival with decent freedom; while the guysers and "reekers," after the manner of buoyant youth, had been flirting with their terrors, and singing and blawing to "keep their spirits up," in the execution of what they conceived to be a national duty, as well as very good individual fun. But there was little real sport in the case; and we would give it as a stanch and unflinching opinion, were it put to us, that the terror of the stranger, and not a love of the liquor she carried, was the true cause of Jenny Simson's having emptied the bottle before she arrived at the residence of Christy Lowrie. Nay, more, we might safely allege—and there is no affidavit in the case—that there might have been more than smoke in the cause of the rapid flight of John Simson and Meg Johnston from their own houses to thatof Wat Webster; and more than the roses in the cheeks of the fair Marion, or Wat Webster's pith of anecdote, that produced the congregation of individuals round his "blazing ingle," at the approach of the eerie hour of twelve, when it was probable the mysterious stranger would again appear. Be all this as it may—and we have no wish to overstate a case in which it is scarcely possible to carry language too far—there cannot be a doubt that the bells of the Franciscan monastery, as they tolled, in reverberating sounds, the termination of the old year and the beginning of the new, on that eventful night, struck a panic into the boldest Heich Hutcheon that ever figured in "Christ's Kirk on the Green."

The statement of Christy Lowrie was perfectly true. Just as the bell tolled, the identical personage, with the red cravat, was seen hurrying forward with his ordinary agility—taking immense strides, and, at times, laughing with the exuberance of his buoyant spirits, on the eve of being gratified by his darling fun—by the east end of the town. The moon threw a faint beam on him as he passed, and exhibited him first to a company of guysers who were chanting at the door of Will Pearson—

"O lusty Maye, with Flora queen."

The song was cut by a severed breath, and, uttering a loud scream, the whole party darted off at full speed, and, as they flew, spread the dreadful intelligence, that he of the red cravat was hurrying into the town from the east. The news was just what was expected; hundreds were waiting *aperto ore* to receive it; and the moment they did receive it, they fled to communicate the intelligence to others. Guysers, reekers, gossips, and tosspots, laid down their songs, their horns, their scandal, and their stoups, and acknowledged their Hogmanay occupation gone. The startling words—"He's come, he's come!" passed from mouth to month. Some shut up their houses, to prevent him from coming into them; and many who were solitary, sought refuge in the houses of their neighbours. Some went out of the town entirely, and sought protection from the abbot of the monastery; and many stood about the corners of the passages and the ends of houses, consulting what should be done in this emergency they had so long

looked for, and were so poorly provided against. In every quarter, fear reigned with absolute sway; and if, in any instances, there was exhibited any portion of courage, it was either derived from the protecting power of a crucifix, or assumed in spite of the collapsing heart of real terror.

But all this did not prevent the stranger from going through his wonted routine. His long strides, and extreme eagerness to get again into the heart of his former extravagant jollity, brought him very soon to the threshold of his old tosspot, Will Pearson, who, with his wife Betty, was sitting at the fire, engaged in a low-toned conversation, on the very subject of him of the red cravat. The door was burst open—the stranger entered with a loud laugh and boisterous salutation.

"A good new year to thee," said he, "Will Pearson!" And he took, at same time, out of a side-pocket, the identical bottle, with a long neck, and a thin waist, and containing the same red whisky he had been so lavish of on former occasions, and set it upon the table with a loud knock that rang throughout the small cottage.

Will Pearson and his wife Betty were riveted to the langsettle on which they sat. Neither of them could move, otherwise they would have either gone out at the back window, or endeavoured to get past the stranger, and hurried out of the door. The quietness of the street told them eloquently that there was no one near to give them any assistance; and such was the enchantment (they said) thrown over them by the extraordinary personage, that they were fixed to their seats as firmly as if they had been tied by cords.

"A good new year to thee!" said the stranger again; and he reached forth his hand, and seized two flasks that lay on a side table, and which they had been using in the convivialities of the day. These he placed upon the table with a loud clank; and, laying hold of a three-footed creepy, he sat down right opposite the trembling pair, and proceeded to empty out the red liquor into the flasks, which he did in the most flourishing and noble style of valiant topers.

"Here, my good old tosspot, Will Pearson!" said he, as he handed to him one of the flasks. "I love thee, man, and have called on thee the first of all the inhabitants of Christ's Kirk. Ha! by the holy rude, what a jolly cruise I shall have!—I have looked forward for it since the last time thou and I reduced the consistency of our corporations to the texture of souls, through which the moon might have shone, by the power of this inimitable liquor. Ho, man, had not we a jolly time of it last time we met? Drink, man!"

And he emptied his flask, and flung it down upon the table, with a bold and reckless air, as if he did not care whether its continuity might be maintained against the force of the bang with which he disposed of it.

Will Pearson was unable to speak a single syllable; and the flask that had been filled for him stood upon the table untouched. He sat with his eyes fixed upon the stranger, and his skin as pale as a corpse. Betty was in the same state of immovable terror. Every word that fell from his lips was a death-knell—every drop of his red drink was as much liquid fire—and every look was a flame.

"Why won't drink, Will Pearson, mine good old crony?" said he again, with the same boisterous manner. "What grieves thee, man? and Betty too?—what loss hast thou sustained? Cuffed by fortune? Broken on her wheel? Ha! ha! I despise the old gammer, and will laugh out my furlough, though my lungs should crack in throwing off the burden.

"'This warld does ever flight and wary,
Fortune sae fast her quhois does cary,
Na time but turn can ever rest;
For quhois false charge suld nane be sary,
And to be merry, I think it best.'

Pull up thy jaws, Will Pearson, and pull into them this flask, and thou shalt be again my merry tosspot."

Will and his wife were still under the influence of their fear, and stared at him in amazement.

"Well, and thou wilt not," he cried, rising hastily, "may the Devil take on for't! My time is counted, and I must stuff as much fun into the compass of an hour as may serve me for the coming year. Will Pearson, thou and I might have had a right jolly time of it. I warrant the galliant Rob Paterson will welcome me in a different manner. The sight of this is enough for Rob," (taking up the bottle;) "and as for this—ha! ha! what goodness getteth not the fire claims."

And, throwing the liquor into the ingle, which blazed up a large and fearful flame by the strength of the spirit, he sallied out, and at the same moment a loud scream—coming from some bolder investigators, who had ventured near the house, and seen the sudden conflagration, followed by the exit of the stranger—rung in echoes all around. But the stranger heeded not these trifling indications of the effect of his visit. Resuming his long strides and pushing-on activity of manner, he soon arrived at the house of Rob Paterson, who was at the very moment addressing a figure of the Virgin.

"A good new year to thee, Rob Paterson!" cried the stranger, as he sat down upon a kind of chair by the side of the table, and, taking out his strange-fashioned bottle of red spirits, banged it down with a noise that made Rob start and shake all over.

"Here again, thou seest, Rob Paterson," continued he. "We must have another jolly bout. Thou knowest my time is short. Let us begin, for my body feels the weight of its own clay. Before the Virgin, Rob? Ha! ha! man, art going to die. Come, man—

"'When grim Death is looking for us,
We are toping at our bowls;
Bacchus joins us in the chorus—
Death, begone!—here's none but souls.

Drink, Rob Paterson, and thou'lt pray the better to the Virgin."

And he held out the bottle to Rob, after having put it bodily to his mouth, and taking a long draught as an example to the latter, who was known to despise flasks. Rob turned up his eyes to the Virgin, and got from her some confidence, if not courage. He looked at the tempting bottle, beautiful in its fulness and total freedom from the contaminating society of flasks or tankards; then he turned a fearful eye on its laughing, rioting possessor, and anon sought again the face of the saint.

"Hast lost thine ancient spirit, Rob Paterson?" said the stranger. "What hath that spare figure, made of dry wood, to do with the mellow fuddling of our noses? Come, man—Time flies; let us wet his wings, and keep him fluttering a while over our heads.

"'With an O and an I,
Now or we furder found,
Drink thou to me, and I to thee,
And let the cap go round.'"

"But wha, in the Devil's name, are ye?" now said Rob Paterson, after many an ineffectual effort to put the question.

"Ha! ha!" answered the stranger, "does Rob Paterson ask a man who is introduced by this friend of noble red-blood, who he is? Why, man, I am Rob Paterson's tosspot. Isn't that enough?"

"No quite," answered Rob, drawing nearer the Virgin. "Satan himself might use the same words; and I crave the liberty to say in your presence, that I hae nae wish to be on drinking terms wi' his Majesty."

And Rob eyed him fearfully as he thus alluded to the

subject of the town's fears, and again sought the face of the saint.

"Ah, Rob Paterson, my once cherished toper," replied the stranger, "I sorrow for thy change. Thine ancient spirit has left thee, and thou hast taken up with wooden idols, in place of the well-filled jolly bottle of thy and my former love. Well, may the Devil take on for't!—I care not. Thou mayst repent of thy folly when I am gone.

"'Robene than has hard soung and say,
In gesties and stories auld—
The man that will not quhen he may,
Sall haif nocht quhen he wald.

Never mair, Rob Paterson, shalt thou have offer of spirit of mine. It shall go there first!"

And, taking a mouthful of the red liquor, the stranger squirted it in the fire, and raised a mighty flame that flared out into the very middle of the street, and produced another echoing cry or scream from the terrified inhabitants. He departed in an instant, and left Rob in a state of agitation he had never felt before at the departure of a guest with a well-filled bottle of good liquor.

The stranger passed out at the door with his usual bold precipitude, and again plied his long limbs in making huge strides along the street, for the house of another crony. He took no notice of the extraordinary demeanour of the inhabitants, who were seen flying away from corners and angles where they had nestled, for the purpose of seeing him come out in a flame of fire from Rob Paterson's, as he had done from Will Pearson's. He strode on, neither looking to the right nor to the left, till he came to Widow Lindsay's.

"A good new year to thee, Dame Lindsay!" said he, as he entered the house by opening the door, which the widow thought she had barred when she shoved the bolt beyond the staple, and found her sitting by the fire counting her rosary, and muttering prayers, with eyes upturned to heaven.

'Holy Mary, save me!" she muttered, as she heard him enter by the supposed locked door. "He's come at last." And she retreated to a corner of the room, and prayed fervently for deliverance.

"Thy throat has doubtless good memory of me and mine," continued the stranger, as he placed on the table the same extraordinary bottle, the shape and dimensions of which were as vivid in the mind of Dame Lindsay as was the colour of the red cravat. "My male tosspots have forgot the taste of my red liquor," he continued; "but what wet gossip's throat ever forgot what nipped it. Come, dame, and let us have a right hearty jorum of this inimitable drink." And, for want of better measure, he seized lustily a bicker that lay near him, and dashed a quantity of the liquor into it. "Ha! I forgot. Get thee for Meg Johnston thy gossip, dame, and let us be merry together. Meg is a woman of a thousand. What a lusty hold she takes of a brimming bicker, and how her eye lightens and brightens as she surveys the swimming heaven under her nose! Come, dame—what ails?"

The only reply he got was a groan, and the rustle of Dame Lindsay's quivering habiliments.

"By my own saint, this town of Christ's Kirk has a change upon it!" he continued. "Last time I was here, it was as merry as King James sang of it. The young and the old hailed me as the prince of good fellows, and the wenches and wives—ha! ha!

"'To dans thir damysells them dight,
Thir lasses light of laits;
They were sae skych when I them nicht,
They squeild like ony gaits.

Dame Lindsay, I perceive what thou wantest, to melt thee into thy former jollity. Thou'rt coquetting in the corner there for a kiss; and, by the holy rude, thou shalt not want it for the space of the twinkling of thine eye."

He rose for the purpose of applying the emollient he had threatened; but a loud scream evinced that a woman, however much she may worship his Satanic Majesty, cares not for his familiarities. The widow fainted; and what may be supposed her feelings, when she found, on coming to herself, that that identical and terrific red liquor had had a share in her recovery! Again she screamed; but no kindly neighbour came to rescue her from her perilous situation. Those who heard her cries, had many strange thoughts as to what species of punishment she was undergoing, for her sins. The conjectures were endless. "What could he be doing to Widow Lindsay?" was the universal question. Some supposed that she was in the act of being carried off, and was struggling to get out of his talons; some looked for the passing flame, in the midst of which, the poor widow, clasped in his arms, would be seen on her luminous journey to the lower world; and there were not few who pretended to find, in the past life of the wretched victim, a very good legitimate cause for the visit of the stranger, and the severity he was clearly exercising towards her.

"Thou'lt be the better for thy faint, Widow Lindsay," said the stranger, as she recovered, "seeing that what blood it has sent from thy heart, will be returned with the addition of that liquor which is truly the water of life. Dost forget, good widow, that, when I was last here, thou and Meg Johnston would have fought for a can of it, if I had not made the can two? Come now, and let us fuddle our noses till they be as red as the liquor itself, and thy spectacles shew thee two noses, before they melt with the heat of their ruby supporter.

'However this world do change and vary,
Oh, let us in heart never more be sary.'"

"Avaunt ye! in the name o' the five holy wounds!" muttered the widow, as she held up the Sathanifuge cross in his face.

"Well, and if thou wilt not, here goes!" replied he, as he threw the contents of the bicker in the fire, which blazed up till the house seemed, to those waiting fearfully in the distance, to be in flames.

Many an eye was now directed to the door and windows, to see Widow Lindsay take her pyromantic flight through the flaming fields of ether; and they continued their gaze till they saw him of the red cravat sally forth, when fear closed up the vision, and they saw no more. Meanwhile he strode on, singing all the way—

"Full oft I muse, and be s in thocht;
How this false warld is aye on flocht,"

till he came to the door of Meg Johnston's cottage. He found it deserted; and then stalked on to honest John Simson's, which was in like manner empty.

"What can this mean?" he said to himself, as he bent his long steps to Wat Webster's, where fearful messengers, as we have seen, had already preceded him. "My person has lost its charm, my converse its interest, and my drink its spirit-stiring power. But we shall see what Wat Webster, and his Dame Kitty, and the fair Marion, say to the residue of my authority. Ah, Marion, as I think of thee—

"'How heises and bleizes
My heart wi' sic a fyre,
As raises these praises
That do to heaven aspire.'

Ha! ha! I will there outdevil all my devilries. My fire-chariots have as yet flown off without a passenger; but this night I shall not go home alone."

And he continued striding onwards in the deserted and silent passage, till he came to Wat Webster's, where the collected inmates were all huddled together round the fire, in that state of alarm produced by the intelligence of Christy Lowry and Widow Lindsay, and already partly set forth by us heretofore. Bang up went the door.

"A good new year to ye all!" said he as he stalked into the middle of the apartment.

There was a dead silence throughout the company. Marion was the only individual that dared to look him in the face; and there was an expresion in her eye that seemed to have the effect of increasing the boisterous glee of his mysterious manner.

"Here we are once more, again," he continued, as he took out the eternal imp-shaped bottle, and clanged it on the table.

Every eye was fixed upon him as if watching his motions and evolutions. Meg Johnston was busy in a corner, defending herself, by drawing a circle round her; Widow Lindsay was clinging close to the figure of the Virgin that was placed against the wall by her side; Jenny Wilson sought refuge in the arms of honest John; Wat Webster himself got his hand placed upon an old Latin Bible, not one word of which he could read; and some followed one mode of self-defence, and some another, against the expected efforts of the stranger, whose proceedings at his other places of call had been all related at Wat Webster's, with an exaggeration they perhaps stood little in need of. The stranger cared nothing for these indications, not a cinder; and took no notice of them.

"I'll e'en begin our potations myself," said he, filling out a flaskful of his liquor, and drinking it off. "By him that brewed it, it tastes well after my long walk! Wat Webster, wilt thou pledge me, man—

"'And let us all, my friends, be merry,
And set nocht by this world a cherry;
Now while there is good wyne to sell,
He that does on dry bread worry,
I gif him to the devil of hell.'"

And he trowled the flask upon the table while he sung, as a kind of bass chorus to his song.

"There's for thee, Wat!" continued he, filling out a flask.

Wat kept his hand upon the holy book.

"Wilt thou, honest John Wilson, pledge thy old friend in this red liquor, which formerly claimed so strong an acquaintanceship with the secret powers of the topers' hearts of merry Christ's Kirk?"

"For the luve o' heaven," whispered Jenny, as she clung closer to him, "touch it not!—it will scald yer liver like brimstone, and may, besides, be the price o' yer soul's purchase."

John looked at the liquor, and would have spoken; but his heart failed him.

"Wilt thou, Meg Johnston, empty this flask to the health of thy old friend?"

"Guid faith, I, lad," muttered Meg, safe as she thought within the walls of her necromantic circumvallation—"I ken ye owre weel. Ye needna think to cheat me. I'm no a spunk to be dipped in brimstone, and then set lowe to. But [aside] how can he stand the look o' the haly rude! and the haly book? The deevil o' sic a deevil I ever heard, saw, or read o'. Avaunt ye, avaunt ye, in the name o' the seven churches! The deil a bane ye'll get here—yere owre weel kenned. Set aff in a flash o' yer ain fire to Falkland."

"Wilt thou, Christy Lowry, pledge thine old friend?" continued the stranger, without noticing Meg's recommendation.

"In guid troth, na," replied Christy, to whom the cross afforded some confidence. "It's a' out, man—it's owre the hail town. There's nae use in concealin't langer. Just put a spunk to the neck o't and set aff. Wae! wae! [aside] but it's an awfu thing to look the enemy i' the very face, and hauld converse wi' lips that mak nae gobs at cinders! Ave Maria! help Chirsty Lowry in this her trial and temptation!"

"Come from thy langsettle, jolly Kate Webster,' continued he of the red cravat, "and let us, as thou wert wont to say, have a little laughing and drinking deray in this first night of the new year. I see, by the very mouths thou makest, thy throat is as dry as a dander, and, by and by, may set fire to my red liquor. Ha! I love a jolly gossip for a tosspot; for she gives more speech, and takes more liquor, than your 'breeked' steers that drink down the words, and drown them in the throat. Nothing drowns a woman's speech. It strengthens and improves in ale or whisky as if it were its natural element. Come open thy word mill, Kate, and pour in the red grist, lass."

"The soopleness o' his tongue has been long kent," whispered Kitty to Meg Johnston.

"Ay, an' lang felt," replied Meg, in a suppressed tone. "Our sins are naething but a coil o't. When, in God's name, will he tak flight? I canna stand this muckle langer."

"Three times have I warded aff a swarf," said Kitty. "The gouch o' his breath comes owre me like the reek o' a snuffed-out candle. Will the men no interfere?"

"Marion Webster," said the stranger, as if unconscious of the fear he was producing, "did I not, sweet queen, dance a jolly fandango with thee, last Halloween, to the rondeau of love—

"'Return the hamewart airt agane,
And byde quhair thou wast wont to be—
Thou art ane fule to suffer paine,
For love of her that loves not thee.'

And wilt thou not pledge thy old friend in a half flask—the maiden's bumper?"

"I hae nae objections," replied the sprightly Marion, and took up the flask.

The company looked on in amazement and terror. The flame would rise on the application of the liquor to her lips, and doubtless little more of Marion Webster would be seen on the face of this lower world. While Mary still held the flask in her hand, the sound of carriage wheels was heard. The vehicle seemed to halt at Wat Webster's door. The door opened with a bang. Marion had not time to drink off her "spark," and, still holding the flask, went to the door to see who had so unceremoniously opened it; he of the red cravat, taking up his bottle, followed with a long stride. A sudden exclamation was heard from Marion; the sound of the shutting of the door of a carriage followed; then came Jehu's "hap-away," with three loud cracks of a whip, and all was ended by the rolling of rapid wheels, lost in a moment in the distance.

Wat Webster, who had hitherto been chained to his seat, now started up; and, clasping his hands in his agony, ejaculated, that "Marion was off in a flame o' fire." The fact scarcely required mention—alas! too evident to all the company—that the greatest beauty of Christ's Kirk was away in the talons of the great Enemy of all good; and the evidence within the walls of the house was not greater than what was afforded by the watching crowd without. The carriage, which was entirely black, and not unlike a hearse, was seen to come in by the east end of the town, driving with a furious career, the driver (dressed also in black) impelling, with a long whip, the black horses, from whose hoofs sparks of fire were seen to fly; and neither house nor man seeming to claim his attention, until he arrived at the house of Wat Webster, where he of the red cravat was known to be. Many followed the carriage, and many remained at a distance to see who the victim was that was destined to be carried off in the stranger's vehicle; for, that the coach was brought there for no other purpose than to carry off one who could command in an instant a chariot of fire, seemed reasonably to be entirely out of the question. Marion Webster, the beloved of the village, was seen to enter, followed by the stranger; and, as the coach flew off, a loud wail burst from the stricken hearts of the villagers, expressive at once of their fear and of the

intense pity they felt for the fate of one so much beloved, and whose crimes, much less than theirs, merited so dreadful a punishment as that she should be carried off to the regions of sorrow. The evidence, within and without the house, met, and, by the force of sympathetic similarity, mixed in an instant, carrying away in their course, like floating straws, the strongest doubts that remained in the mind of the most sceptical man in Christ's Kirk, of the hapless daughter of Wat Webster having been carried off by the Devil. The town was in the greatest commotion; terror and pity were painted on every face; but the feelings of the public held small proportion, indeed, to the agony which overtook Wat Webster and his wife, whose only child she was, as well as their pride, and that of every one in the whole town. Wat, who saw no use in flying after Sathan—an individual of known locomotive powers—lay extended on the floor of his cottage, cursing his fate, and bewailing the condition of his lovely daughter, whose entry into Pandemonium, and first scream produced by the burning lake, were as distinct in his eye and ear as ever was his morning porridge, when they boiled and bubbled by the heat of the fire. But Kitty was up and out, with a mighty crowd or tail in attendance, flying up and down in every direction, to see if any burning trace could be had of her beloved Marion; for she declared that, if she only got "the dander o' her body to bury in Christ's Kirk," she would be thankful to heaven for the gift, and try to moderate her grief. But no "dander" was to be seen. It was by much too evident that Marion Webster would never more be seen on earth; and, what might naturally add to the grief of her friends, they had no chance of seeing her again in the world to come, unless at the expense of a *condemnation*—a dear passport to see an old friend. Such a night was never seen in Christ's Kirk as that on which Marion Webster was carried off by his Sathanic Majesty.

We have said quite enough to make it to be understood that Marion Webster did in reality go off in a coach with the stranger who has occupied so much of our attention; but we have (being of Scottish origin) prudently abstained from giving any opinion of our own upon the question of the true character of him of the red cravat. The two drove off together, apparently with much affection, and, after they had got entirely beyond the reach of any supposed followers, they became comparatively easy, and very soon commenced a conversation—an amusement never awanting when there is a woman within reach of a person's articulated breath.

"What is the meaning o' a' this, Geordie, man?" said Marion, looking lovingly into the face of the stranger. "Could I no have met ye this night at the three sisters—the trees in the wood o' Ballochgray—without your coming to Christ's Kirk, and spreading the fear o' the deil frae town's-end to town's-end? But whar are we journeying to? and what means the carriage?"

The stranger thus accosted by the familiar name by which he was known to the young woman, smiled, and told her to hold her tongue, and resign herself to the pleasure of being carried through the air at the rate of ten miles an hour. The moon was now shining beautifully "owre tower and tree;" and ever and anon the maiden glanced her blue eye on the "siller-smolt" scenes through which she passed, and then turned to the face of her companion, who seemed to enjoy silently the wonder expressed by her fair face. After rolling on for some time, they came to a road or avenue of tall beech trees, at the end of which appeared an old castle, on which the moonbeams were glancing, and exhibiting in strange forms the turrets with which it was fancifully decorated. The grey owl's scream was borne along on the breeze that met them, and struck on Marion's ear in wild and fitful sounds—inspiring a dread which the presence of her mute lover did little to remove or assuage.

"Is not that Ballochgray Castle?" said Marion, at last—"that fearfu place whar the Baron of Ballochgray haulds his court with the Evil One, on every Halloween night, when the bleak muirs are rife with the bad spirits o' the earth and air. Whar drives the man, Geordie? Oh, tell him to turn awa frae thae auld turrets and skreeching owls. I canna bear the sight o' the ane, or the eerie sound o' the ither."

A smile was again the answer of her companion, and the carriage still drove on to the well-known residence of the young Baron of Ballochgray—a man who, knowing the weakness of his King, James the Third of Scotland, in his love of astrology and divination, and their sister black arts, had, with much address, endeavoured to recommend himself to his sovereign, by a character, pre-established in his own castle, for a successful cultivation of the occult sciences. He had long withdrawn himself from the eyes of the world, and even of his own tenants, and shut himself up in his castle, with a due assortment of death's heads, charts, owls, globes, bones, astrolobes, and vellum chronicles, with a view to the perfection of his hidden knowledge; or, as some thought, with a view to produce such a fame of his character and pursuits as might reach the ears of James, and acquire for him that sway at court for which he sighed more than for real knowledge. Some alleged that he was a cunning diplomatist, who cared no more for the nostrums of astrology than he did for the dry bones that, while they terrified his servants, had no more virtue in them than sap, and were, with the other furniture of his dark study, collected for the mere purpose of forwarding his ambitious designs upon the weak prince. His true character was supposed to be—what he possessed before he took to his new calling—that of a wild, eccentric, devil-daring man, who loved adventures for their own sake, and worshipped the fair face of the "theekit and tenanted skull" of a bouncing damsel, with far greater enthusiasm and sincerity than he ever did his mortal osteological relics that lay in so much profusion in the recesses of his old castle. But he had, doubtless, so far succeeded in his plans; for he possessed a most unenviable fame for all sort of cantrips and sorceries; and the wandering beggar would rather have solicited a bit of bread from the iron hand of misery itself, than ventured near Ballochgray to ask his awmous.

"I winna gang near that fearfu place, Geordie!" again cried Marion. "What hae ye, a puir hind, to do wi' the Baron o' Ballochgray? Turn, for the sake o' heaven!—turn frae that living grave o' dry banes, an' the weary goul that sits jabbering owre them, by their ain light!"

Her companion again smiled; and the man dashed up the avenue, and never stopped till he came to the gate of the castle—over which there were placed two human shank-bones of great length, that were said to have sustained the body of the Baron of Balwearie—that prince of the black art, and the most cunning necromancer that ever drew a circle. The carriage stopped; and two servants, dressed in red doublets, (like garments of fire,) slashed with black, waited at the carriage door, with flambeaux in their hands, to shew the couple into the hall. Out sprang the male first, and then Marion Webster was handed, with great state, and led into the interior of the old castle. She was led direct into the hall, which was lighted up in a very fanciful manner, by means of many skulls arranged round the room, and through the eyes and jaws of which lurid lights streamed all around. Marion was filled with terror as she cast her eyes on these shining monuments of mortality; and had, in her fear, scarcely noticed a man in black, sitting at the end of the room, poring over a black-lettered manuscript.

"Marion Webster," now said her travelling companion, "behold in your old lover of the Ballochgray Wood the Baron of Ballochgray!"

A scream burst from the choking throat of the terrified damsel, and rung through the old hall.

"Come, love," he continued, "abate thy terrors. My fame is worse than my real character. I have wooed thee for reasons known to myself, and to be known soon to thee. Thou didst love Geordie Dempster; and thy love was weak indeed, if it is to be scared by brainless tongues or tongueless skulls. Wilt thou consent to be the lady of the Baron of Ballochgray?"

"Geordie! Geordie!" cried the wondering, and yet loving maiden, "if I would willingly wed thee in the grave, wi' death himsel for oor priest, shall I refuse to be yours in a castle o' the livin, filled though it be wi' thae signs o' mortality?"

"Come forth, Father Anthony!" cried the Baron, "and join us by the rules and bands of holy kirk?"

The man in black lifted up his head from the black-letter page; and, having called his witnesses, went through the requisite ceremonies; and Marion Webster became, within a short space, the lady of Ballochgray.

Next day the Baron took her forth to the green woods, where, as they sauntered among elms many centuries old, and as high as castles, he told her that he had more reasons than other men for having a wife *who could keep a secret*. When he first met her, he was struck with her beauty, but had no more intention than ordinary love adventurers for making her his wife; frequent intercourse had revealed to him a jewel he had never seen in such brightness in the *head gear* of the nobles of the land—a stern and unflinching regard to the sanction of her word. He quickly resolved to test this in such a manner as would leave no doubt in his mind that a secret-keeping wife he might find in his humble maiden of Ballochgray woods. He had three times visited Christ's Kirk in such a manner as would raise an intense curiosity in the inhabitants as to who he was. Marion had the secret only of his being plain Geordie Dempster; but so firmly and determinedly had she kept it, that, in the very midst of a general belief that he was the Prince of Darkness, she had never even let it be known that she had once seen his face before. So far Marion was enlightened; and it is not improbable that, afterwards, she knew *why* a secret-keeping wife was so much prized by the Baron of Ballochgray, and why he could serve two purposes—that of love, and fame of supernatural powers—in personating, as he had done, the Prince of Darkness in his visits to Christ's Kirk on the Green. So far, at least, it is certain that Marion never revealed the secret of his pretended astrological acquirements.

For weeks after the marriage, inquiries were made in every quarter for the lost damsel; but, at last, all search and inquiry was given up, and the belief that she was in the place appointed for the wicked had settled down on the minds of the people. One evening a number of cronies were assembled at the house of the disconsolate parents, and among these were Meg Johnston, Christy Lowrie, Widow Lindsay, and others of the Leslians.

"The will o' the Lord maun be done," said Meg; "but, wae's me! there was mony an auld gimmer in Leslie, whose horns are weel marked wi' the lines o' her evil days, that Clootie might hae taen, afore he cam to the bonnie ewe that had only tasted the first leaves o' her summer girse. What did Marion Webster ever do in this warld to bring upon her this last and warst o' the evils o' mortals?"

"It's just the like o' her the auld villain likes best," rejoined Christy. "He doesna gie a doit for a gizzened sinner, wha will fa' into his hands at the lang run without trouble. But the young, the blooming, and the bonny are aye sair beset by temptations; and, heard ye never, Mrs Webster, o' Marion's meetings at the Three Sisters, sometimes, they say, at the dead hour, wi' some lover that naebody ever kenned?"

"Ay, ay, dame," said Widow Lindsay; "that's just *his* way. He comes in the shape o' a young lover, and beguiles the hearts o' young maidens. Ye mind o' bonny Peggy Lorimer o' the town's-end, wha never did mair guid after she met a stranger in the woods o' Ballochgray. Ae glance o' his ee, she said, took awa her heart; and, every day after, she pined and pined, and wandered amang the woods till she grew like a wraith, but nae mair o' him did she ever see. I strieked her wi' my ain hands, and sic a corpse I never handled. There wasna a pound o' flesh on her banes; and the carriers at the burial aye said, that there wasna a corpse ava in the coffin. But puir Marion has dreed a waur weird."

"My puir bairn! my puir bairn!" cried the mother. "The ook o' Leslie aye said she wad ride in her carriage, for she was the bonniest lass that ever was seen in Christ's Kirk. But, wear-a-wins! little kenned they what kind o' a carriage she wad ride awa in on her marriage night."

"Some folks say, the monks will pray her back again," rejoined Meg; "but, my faith, they'll hae hard wark o't. He'll no let her awa without a fearfu tuilzie, Christy."

"She'll never mair be seen on earth, woman," answered Christy. "And, even if she were to be prayed back again, she wad never be the creature she was, again. A coal black lire, and singit ee-brees, wadna set her auld lovers in Christ's Kirk in a bleeze again."

"They should watch the smoking field o' Dysart," cried Widow Lindsay. If she come again ava, it will be through that deil's porch. But what noise is that, Kitty? Didna ye hear the sound o' carriage wheels?"

The party listened attentively; and, to be sure, there was a carriage coming rattling along the street.

"Get out the Latin Bible, Wat?" cried Kitty. "He's maybe coming to tak us awa next."

The listening continued; and when the sounds ceased, as the carriage stopped at the door, and the postilion's whip cracked over the restless horses, a cry of terror rang through the room. Every one shrank into a corner, and muttered prayers mixed with the cries of fear. The door opened. Every eye was fixed upon it, for no one doubted that their old friend had returned. The Baron of Ballochgray and his lady, dressed in the most gorgeous style, entered the house of the old couple. The sight of the gay visiters made Wat and Kitty's eyes reel; and they screamed again from the fear that the Prince had come back, only in a new doublet, to exhibit to them their *sold* daughter.

"I beg to introduce thee," said the Baron, "to the lady of Ballochgray—my wedded wife."

Marion, without waiting for an answer, fell upon the neck of her father; and then, in the same manner, she embraced her mother; but it was a long time before the fears of Wat and Kitty were removed. At last, they were persuaded to accompany them on a visit to Ballochgray Castle; and, when they rode off in the chariot, they left behind them the belief that they too were carried off by the "Old One." We cannot pretend to describe the feelings of Wat and his wife when they were introduced into the old castle; but they soon came to see that the Baron of Ballochgray was just "as guid a chiel in his ain castle as ever he was when he acted the Deevil in Christ's Kirk on the Green."

WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE RIGHTFUL HEIR.

Horatio Frederick Spriggins was the son of his father; but who his father was, was a mystery to Horatio Frederick Spriggins, as well as to everybody else. As far back as his recollection could go, he only remembered his serving in the capacity of a link-boy at the Haymarket. Now that he was grown a man, and the race of link-boys was extinct, he kept this horrible secret within his own bosom, and determined to achieve greatness—how, or by what means, he had not as yet determined. He was but a bookseller's message-man, with four and sixpence a-week; and, but for a most unexpected circumstance, he would probably have remained so for ever. The circumstance alluded to was his receiving, one morning, an anonymous letter, with an enclosure of fifty pounds, recommending him to set himself agoing in business on his own account. This was one step towards his ideal greatness; and he, thereupon, engaged a small shop, situated somewhere in the east end of London, and devoted his leisure hours to dispensing cheap periodicals to the public in general, at the price marked upon them—by which means he contrived to earn as much as kept him pretty genteelly. He was not extravagant—no, Horatio Frederick Spriggins was not extravagant. He lived in his shop during the day, and slept in an attic during the night—obtained at the moderate charge of five shillings per week, finding his own napery. Neither was he exuberant in his expenditure on the article of dress. On the week-days, he wore an old coat—on the Sundays, what he was pleased to term a new one It had borne that appellation for, at least, four years and a half; but, being donned only fifty-two times during the year, it was quite as good as new. His inexpressibles usually lasted till they were done. For recreation, he once a fortnight or so adjourned, at half-price, to the upper gallery of one of the minor theatres; and, on occasions of this sort, he was often tempted to indulge himself in some slight refreshment—usually twopence worth of oranges or apples. In short, his life passed in one round of joy and contentment; but, alas! this was not to last long.

Being prevailed upon to accompany a haberdasher's apprentice—whose acquaintance he had formed from seeing him, every Saturday morning, make his appearance in his shop for the current number of *The Penny Magazine*—being prevailed on, we say, to accompany this young gentleman to a soirée, he there saw and was smitten with the charms of Mrs Seraphina Snowdrop, the relict of a tallow-chandler at Bath. She, tired of the state of single-blessedness, after having experienced the double form, had come to London in search of a second Snowdrop; and was going the round of all public places, seeking whom she might devour. Horatio—having made inquiries, and found that the lady possessed an unencumbered annuity of two hundred per annum, and was in nowise burdened with little responsibilities—sought an introduction; and, through the interest of the haberdasher's apprentice's sister's husband's mother's aunt, was lucky enough to obtain it. He was desirous, however, of concealing the circumstance of his being in trade; and wished to pass for a private entleman, living upon the interest of his money—sum unde fined.

Seraphina listened to his suit; and, in three weeks from the date of their first interview, became Mrs Spriggins. Then there was the searching for a cheap house, in a genteel quarter of the town—a purchasing of carpets and of furniture—a hiring of servants—(one maid-of-all-work, and one black boy, to run of errands and open the door)—a running here, and a running there—and a great deal of bustle, to very little purpose. At length, however, in Seymour Crescent, Euston Square, their residence was fixed; the carpets, furniture, maid-of-all-work, and black boy, were allotted their respective positions in the mansion; and, for the first week,

"All went merry as a marriage bell."

"Don't you think, love," said Mrs Spriggins to the gentleman who entitled her to that same appellation, on the heptadieversary of their wedding day—"Don't *you* think that we ought to take a jaunt? Every one, you know, dear, does it, after their marriage. I'm sure, now, Horatio, after all the love I bring you, and all the money I have expended in furnishing the house, you *might* put yourself to the trifling expense of a journey to Scotland. I have an aunt resides somewhere near Edinburgh; and, I'm sure, dear, we might get her to accompany us to see the lake that Lord Byron's lady lived in, when Ivanhoe came to see her, and take tea with Rob Roy's wife."

"Yes, my love, we might," tenderly replied Horatio Frederick, at the same time trembling about the money. Where it was to come from he knew not. Ever since he had laid siege to the widow, he had filled up his own place in his own shop with a man on whom he had settled the weekly allowance of ten shillings and sixpence; and the profit arising from the sale of the cheap periodicals had just been barely sufficient to cover this man's wages, and yield Horatio a weekly sum of two shillings and sixpence over and above, to lay up against the term time. Horatio, after turning this over in his mind, turned over on his back upon the couch, whereon he lay reading the last number of Bentley's Miscellany, and pretended to sleep, at the same time permitting the book to drop from his hand upon the floor.

The lovely Seraphina, who was descanting on the pleasures of travelling, the while she was tying up some jam-pots, started at the sound, and lifted up her eyes. Without much ado, she left her occupation, and proceeded to tickle Spriggins' face with a small bit of twine; and, at length succeeding in rousing him, she insisted on his going to bed. To bed accordingly he went, and, ere his wife had got her jam-pots put away, her cupboard locked up, and other preliminaries adjusted, he was asleep in right earnest.

At breakfast next morning, Mrs Spriggins again attacked him upon the necessity of a marriage jaunt, and, having wrung a reluctant consent from him, she allowed him to go out by himself to walk. He did not return to dinner till fully half-an-hour after the usual time. Mrs Spriggins could not imagine what had become of him, and was proceeding to the business of mastication, *sola cum sola*, when the door-bell was hastily rung, and into the room rushed

Horatio Frederick Spriggins, pale, and with his hat over his eyes. A few minutes elapsed ere he gained sufficient composure to give utterance to his feelings in words.

"Seraphina!" he at length said, in a hollow voice, "you wish to go to Scotland?"

"I'm sure I told you so last night, Horatio, and this morning too; and, you know, you promised to go."

"Then, Seraphina, dearest, it's all up! We must stay at home, now! I'm—prepare yourself for the shock—I'm a ruined man!"

"A ruined man!" ejaculated the wife.

"Even so, dearest girl—all is gone!"

"What's gone?"

"My money!—every penny I had! The bank which held ten thousand pounds of it, broke yesterday, and the insurance office, whose stock I held to the extent of five-and-twenty pounds, was burned to the ground this morning—not a stone remaining. The bank was situated in *Skye*—the insurance office in *Ayr*. O Seraphina, I'm a ruined man!—I have not a rap I can call my own."

"Come, come, Horatio! don't be down-hearted; for, while I have a penny in the world, my husband shall share it with me. See, here's eighteenpence to begin with," continued Mrs Spriggins, placing a bright shilling and sixpence in the palm of her husband's hand. "That must keep you in pocket-money till we arrive in Edinburgh. I'll pay all the travelling expenses."

"Noble, generous woman!" cried Horatio, "come to these arms!" And he hugged her till she cried out "Don't!"

Everything being arranged for the journey to Scotland, the black boy was left to take care of the premises in Seymour Crescent; the servant-of-all-work to take care of the black boy; and no one to take care of the maid-of-all-work. Horatio Frederick Spriggins and spouse set off from Blackwall at ten o'clock on a Saturday night in the beginning of July, and arrived in Edinburgh without any accident having befallen them, just as the hour went five from the Register Office, on the afternoon of the following Monday.

Aurora had called and called upon old Phœbus to arise; and, when at length in a reluctant mood he did so, he swore that, in perversity, grim Jove had washed his dirty night-shirt in Neptune's water-butt, and hung it out to dry; for, let him stretch his neck ever so long, he could not catch one glimpse of Mother Earth. He added, that he was of opinion her inhabitants were at that moment getting the full benefit of the drippings from the shirt-tail; and, in sooth, Sol's view of the matter was far from being an incorrect one, for the morning—the Tuesday morning—was ushered in amidst gloom and rain.

The hands upon the clocks of Modern Athens were all fast hastening towards that hour which numbereth the Muses. Schoolboys, with the delightful prospect of vacation in a few weeks, were chalking upon the walls, as they went along with gleesome step—

"Oh, for August and September!"

The smaller of the species bore satchells on their backs; the bigger boys carried their books, which, at their dexter thighs, were pendant, in straps slung across their sinister shoulders. Milliner girls hurried along, ever and anon casting a sickly smile upon their favoured 'prentices as they passed, who, in obedience to their fear or pride of being seen by some less fortunate individual, nodded in return, or passed by unnoticing. Briefless barristers, on their way to the Parliament House, shuffled by with papers in their hands for show; and postmen "walked their lonely round," making it a point never to leave a letter without the money.

"Come along, Spriggins, dear!—la! how you tire one! Do walk a little quicker—there's a dear!" So said Mrs Spriggins to her husband, as she dragged him, in an easterly direction, along Prince's Street, on that Tuesday morning. "We'll be too late for the coach, you'll see, and then we'll have to walk all the way to Portobello before we can see aunt—and I don't know how far that's off, *I'm* sure."

"Nor I, love—nor I," insinuated Horatio, breathless with walking at such a round pace as his wife wished to keep up. "I think," continued he; "I think I once heard some one once say somewhere, that it was forty miles, at least, from Edinburgh."

"Oh! you fool you! it ain't half that, I'm certain; but do come on, will you?" said the lady, in rather commanding accents considering.

They walked on some time in solemn silence, when she resumed—

"Mr S., Mr S., this comes of your staying out of nights. You're always so hot of a morning, there's no good to be got of you. Ain't you ashamed of yourself, for to come for to go for to stay out so late last night, and leave me a-moping in that nasty inn. It was half-past twelve before you made your appearance—hold up the umbrella!"

"No, no, Seraphina, dearest, it wasn't so bad as that," said Horatio, blandly, at the same time obeying the lady's command with regard to the umbrella. "It was only a quarter-past; for I heard the watchman call twelve, at least twenty times, as I came along, and I'm sure it was no more nor the quarter when I came in."

"Half—past—twelve, Mr S.!" exclaimed the lady, in a tone which admitted of no contradiction, and Spriggins gave in from politeness.

When one happens to be late going home, and there is another waiting for him to whom he must account for his lateness, he is ever as fain to clip something off the time, though it be only five minutes, as the other is to call it later than is really the case. With Horatio this had occurred the preceding evening.

The violent effects of the voyage not having entirely left Mrs Spriggins when she reached the hotel in Prince's Street, nor even after she had imbibed two cups of Hookey's mixture, she signified to Horatio her intention of remaining where she was all the evening, at the same time condescendingly allowing him liberty, and fifteen shillings of pocket money, to go out by himself if he chose—a permission of which he gladly availed himself, by adjourning to the theatre at half-price. When he entered the pit lobby, there were some dozen persons waiting to be admitted; and, on the announcement of "half-price!" there was such a pushing and a squeezing to get forward to the money-taker, that one would have thought there were at least twelve hundred people instead of twelve—so great was the din they occasioned. In the hubbub, Mr Spriggins' corns were trod on by a half-military-looking, middle-aged man, with a trifle of whisker circumventing his cheeks, and with a closely shaven chin and upper lip, of rather a bluish tinge, owing to the peculiar character of his beard. Horatio cried out, and, jumping up in agony, gave this blue-beard an accidental kick on the calf of the leg. He instantly wheeled round, and coolly presented his card to Spriggins, asking for his in return. Flurried beyond measure at this demand, Spriggins, after the lapse of some minutes, spent in searching his pockets, brought out a card and handed it to the military-looking man, who said he should hear from him to-morrow morning, and disappeared among the crowd. This rencounter put Horatio Frederick Spriggins out of sorts for the rest of the evening; he could not enjoy the play, and he could not enjoy the faces of the audience—which is one of the chief delights of veteran playgoers; so about half-past ten o'clock he left the theatre, and stepped into a neighbouring coffee-room, to quench his agitation in a lobster and a pint of stout.

"Capital thing, lobsters, sir, when you can get them good!" remarked an attenuated man in a blue pea-jacket, buttoned close up to the chin, to prevent people from remarking upon his shirt. He had, for the last few minutes, being sitting in the box opposite to Spriggins, seemingly, for want of better fare, devouring the contents of a newspaper; but, really, eyeing in envy, over the top of it, Horatio's lobster and pint of stout.

"Very!" replied Spriggins, without lifting his head from his plate, whereon he had placed a claw.

"Perhaps you'd like to see the newspaper, sir?" volunteered the man. "Capital thing a newspaper, sir, when you can get it good!"

"Very!" again assented Spriggins; "but I never reads the newspapers."

"Ah! you are perfectly right, sir!—perfectly right!—decidedly!" said the man, peremptorily—at the same time dexterously extending the broad sheet between Spriggins and the plate containing the remains of the lobster, and persuading the latter to leap off the plate into his pocket-handkerchief, which was outspread upon his knees. Spriggins dashed away the newspaper with indignation; for, in addition to the fact of its being a newspaper, he now had an opportunity of observing that it bore a title quite opposed to his political feelings. "I beg ten thousand pardons!" quoth the inhabitant of the pea-jacket. "I meant no offence, I do assure you. Your health, sir!" And, with the utmost nonchalance, he drunk off entirely Spriggins' as yet untasted pint of stout. Spriggins sat aghast, with his fists hard clenched round the handles of his knife and fork, which rested on the table perpendicularly, and said nothing, from very amazement. His new acquaintance, however, soon put an end to the awkward pause (not Spriggins' paws), by exclaiming—"Capital thing stout, sir, when you can get it good! They keep it very good in this house—very!" He then resumed his seat, and went on conning his newspaper.

Curiosity was awakened in the breast of Horatio Frederick; and after wondering to himself in vain for fully five minutes "who this impudent personage could be," he rang the bell, and in a whisper inquired of the waiter.

"O Sir! that's the great Siberian necromancer. He's an Irishman, I think. He has performances in our large room up stairs every evening. He's just done, sir; but as there were only six people in the room, he can't afford to have any supper; and we don't give no trust to them sort of people."

"Very well, young man," said Spriggins aloud—"but," continued he, glancing at the empty plate, "I did'nt desire you to take away the lobster."

"No more I did, sir."

"Zounds!" cried Horatio—but whatever else he was about to say was lost for ever, by the Siberian necromancer in the pea-jacket coming forward and informing him that he saw him put the lobster into his hat.

"I'm blowed if I did!" indignantly muttered Spriggins.

The hat was looked into; but no lobster was there.

"Now," said the necromancer to him, "I'll bet you a bottle of champagne that I find the lobster in your hat!"

The bet was taken; the lobster produced from the interior of the hat; the champagne ordered in; and in less than ten minutes it was all discussed. Spriggins paid the bill with some reluctance; and the necromancer agreeing to see him safe home, they reeled into the street together.

Spriggins was anxious to get home to the inn as soon as possible; for he calculated his wife would be, by this time, in no very delightful humour. He communicated his fears to his sudden friend, the necromancer, who openly coincided with him on the propriety of going straight home, but secretly determined to be the cause of his going two or three miles about. After performing circuitous movements among lanes and blind alleys, and always bringing his charge back to the spot whence they originally started, the necromancer, seeing a policeman advancing, in a fit of enthusiasm shivered a lamp, and coolly walked off, leaving Spriggins to bear the blame. The crash of glass brought the policeman to the spot in less than no time. He seized Spriggins by the collar; and, thumping his baton against the pavement, the street was presently filled with other Charlies, and Spriggins was marched off to the police-office. The constable of the night, seeing by Spriggins' dress that he could afford to pay, inquired his name and address. Horatio had heard that nobody ever gave their real name on such occasions; and, besides, he thought his case might perhaps appear in the public prints—his wife was sure to see it, and he would never hear the end of it. So, with an unblushing countenance, he boldly answered—

"Mr. Hoskins, 31 York Place."

Now, 31 York Place is a blind door, and the only one in Edinburgh—a fact which was communicated to Horatio by the man with the salary of ten and sixpence a-week. He had once been in Edinburgh.

"That's enough," said the constable, thrusting into his hands a summons for him to appear before the court on the morrow; but which Spriggins regarded as a bit of waste paper. "You may go, after paying eighteenpence to the clerk here."

Spriggins thrust the paper into his pocket without looking at it, paid his eighteenpence, and left the police office. By dint of inquiry he soon picked his way to his inn, which he reached at exactly five-and-twenty minutes past twelve. Though his wife endeavoured, by threatening, by coaxing, and by teasing, to elicit the truth as to where he had been, and what had become of all the money she gave him, it was all in vain. He maintained a stubborn silence regarding the past evening's transactions.

The hour of nine sounded forth throughout the city, and, for once in their lives, the clocks of New Athens agreed as to the time, as Horatio Frederick and his better half took their seats in the Portobello coach, at the corner of the North Bridge. The streets were now peopled with workmen, who had a short way to go, proceeding to breakfast; and children carrying breakfast to their fathers, whose homes were situated at a long distance from their place of labour.

"Crack went the whip, round went the wheels,"

and away flew the Portobello coach, and Mrs Spriggins' heart bounded with delight at the thoughts of soon clasping in her embrace her rich widowed aunt, Mrs Sally Biggleswade.

The romantic village of Portobello is situated close to the Frith of Forth, three miles to the eastward of Edinburgh; and thither, during the summer, families resort for the sea-bathing—this they call "going to the country." Oh! 'tis a most pleasurable amusement to saunter along the seabeach there, on a beauteous summer's day. There are middle-aged folks seated on camp-stools, *pretending* to stare at the coast of Fife, through telescopes; and young folks playing about old folks' knees; and young ladies and young gentlemen disporting themselves promiscuously in the water; and bathing-machines, and wet nurses and dry nurses, charged with very young folks; and plenty of bustle, and lots of agitation.

Astonishment was superlative in the system of Mr Spriggins, when, on entering the drawing-room of Mrs Biggleswade, the first object that met his gaze was the military looking man with the blue beard, who had trampled on his corns at the door of the theatre the preceding evening.

Mrs Spriggins presented her husband, in due form, to her

aunt, and her aunt introduced the military-looking man, with the blue beard, as Lieutenant-Colonel Hugh M'Intyre, of the Edinburgh troop of Royal Mid-Lothian Yeomanry Cavalry, who rose, bowed to Mrs Spriggins, cast a look of ineffable contempt upon the husband, and stalked out of the room, with a stiffness of manner, which one might be apt to imagine was caused by his having swallowed at least half-a-dozen bottles of Crooks' patent decoction of pokers.

The weather having exhibited symptoms of clearing up, after some palaver, port wine, and hard biscuits, Spriggins and his wife, preceded by Mrs Sally Biggleswade, sallied forth, to look at and admire the wonders of the small spot of ground behind the house, allotted to the double purpose of a garden and a bleaching green. They had walked about for some time, enjoying each other's company as well as relations can do, when a maidservant appeared, whispered something in Mrs Biggleswade's ear, and that respectable lady, begging to be excused for a few moments, followed the servant into the house. Ten—twenty minutes—half an hour elapsed, and no reappearance of the lady. Spriggins was getting rather fidgetty, and wishing they had not come. Five minutes more passed, at the end of which the same maidservant advanced from the house, performed the same part with Mrs Spriggins as she had previously done with Mrs Biggleswade, and that lady also, begging to be excused for a few minutes, left her husband to walk by himself, and meditate if he could. "This is all very mysterious!" thought he, and he began examining the structure of the cabbage plant. Another ten minutes elapsed, and he was still alone—"What the deuce are they about?" he said unto himself, and he would have given his ears off to have solved that question; for the bump of curiosity was pretty well developed in his pericranium. At length, observing the maidservant advancing, he rushed forward; but, ere he had time to ask any question, she said, "Mrs Spriggins desires your presence in the drawing-room," and immediately thereafter disappeared.

With reluctant steps he proceeded to obey the mandate. "It is very odd," he thought, "that Seraphina should send for me;" for he had observed that, unless there was something of very great importance to be discussed, his wife never sent for him, but invariably made it a point to come herself.

In the drawing-room he found his wife and her aunt Sally seated close together on a sofa, in earnest confabulation, when he entered. He shut the door animatedly, and the noise caused them to look up.

"Ain't you ashamed of yourself?" exclaimed both women at once.

"Can't say I am, my darlings!"

"Don't darling me," cried his wife; "you're a good-for-nothing fellow, you are!" And here she began to shed tears.

"He's worse!" exclaimed Aunt Sally—"he's a villain!"

"Yes!" said Mrs Spriggins, "you're a villain!—a base deceiver!—We've found you out, sir. Did you ever see this card before?" And exultingly she drew forth a calling card, on which was inscribed the name of "Mr Perkins."

"Oh! yes, my love!" replied Horatio, to her amazement in nowise abashed. "I've seen it both before and behind—he! he! he!—it's the card of——" He could go no farther without revealing the secret of his shop; for Perkins was his man with ten and sixpence a-week.

"See—he hesitates!" said the wife.

"Not a bit, my love. The card is the card—yes, ma'am, is the card of—of a friend of mine!"

"A friend of yours!" tauntingly remarked Aunt Sally; "you're aggravating the case, sir; but we have a witness, sir, to prove that this card belongs to you, and that you find it convenient sometimes to throw aside the name of Spriggins—which, of course, is assumed—and take upon yourself that of Perkins."

"Upon my life—upon my soul, ma'am, you—you wrong me!"

"Don't you mark his agitation?" whispered the aunt to her niece; "confirmation strong as proofs from holy writ. Come forth and confront the impostor!" she added, *alto voce;* and the folding doors at the further end of the room yawned, and, from the inner drawing-room, there stepped forth Lieutenant-Colonel M'Intyre, of the Edinburgh Troop of Royal Mid-Lothian Yeomanry Cavalry! Spriggins was awe-struck.

"Now, Colonel!" continued Mrs Biggleswade, "what of this card?"

Lieutenant-Colonel M'Intyre hesitated; but, on Mrs Spriggins' express assurance that her husband dared do nothing desperate while she was in the room, the gallant Lieutenant-Colonel answered—with a sufficiency of the Highland twang in his delivery—that he had received the card from the man calling himself Spriggins, at the door of the playhouse the preceding evening, and that he had given his own in exchange, intending to send a friend to arrange matters for a meeting, for he had received an insult which could only be washed out in blood; that there being no address on the card, his friend had been unable to find the person to whom it belonged.

At this moment a violent knocking and ringing was heard at the outer door; heavy steps were then heard coming up stairs; the door was opened; the servant announced "An officer!" and in walked—a police officer followed by two day-policemen.

"This is our man!" cried the sergeant of police, advancing towards and laying hands upon Spriggins. His wife rushed between, and frantically inquired what was the matter.

"Matter enough!" said the sergeant. "This fellow had the owdaucity to lacerate a lamp last night; and, when he comed to the office, he gave out that his name was Hoskins. The constable summonsed him under that name, and, he not appearing to-day when called, we made inquiries, and traced him here. It seems he goes under the name of Spriggins."

Mrs Spriggins cast a look of contempt upon her little husband, while Mrs Biggleswade formed a picture of surprise, and Lieutenant-Colonel M'Intyre looked as starched and stuck-up-like as if he had been forced to swallow a dish of cold porridge, with a corresponding quantity of milk "upon the turn."

"Police-office!—Hoskins!—Spriggins!—Perkins!" exclaimed the trio in a breath.

A pause then ensued of two minutes' duration.

"Do you mark that?" said the Lieutenant-Colonel apart to Mrs Biggleswade. "I shouldn't be the least surprised if he belonged to the swell mob!"

"Perhaps Swing himself in disguise," insinuated she.

"Very probably!" responded the other; "but, see, the fellow is about to say something."

"Though I detest the name of Spriggins," said that gentleman; "yet, by it am I known; and not one is fool enough to give his own name at a police-office. Besides, I did not break the lamp!"

"We'll see that," observed the first policeman; "in the meantime, you must come with us!"

Mr Spriggins frowned, and Mrs Spriggins screamed, and would certainly have scratched the faces of the Charlies, had not another interruption here taken place, by the entrance of a courier direct from London, who had come to announce that Sir Carnaby Sprigs, on his deathbed, had made oath that thirty years before he had been secretly yet lawfully wedded to Miss Nigelli, a ballet dancer at the Haymarket, and by her had had a son. That Miss Nigelli

has thought proper to run away to France with a Monsieur Squecky, leaving her lawful husband and her child in England, without the slightest clue to enable the one to find the other. That all Sir Carnaby's inquiries after his offspring had been fruitless, until within a few months, when, on discovering the boy, he had remitted him a sum of money anonymously, to set him agoing in business; and, finally, that that boy was no other than Horatio Frederick Spriggins, whom the courier now hailed as Sir Horace Sprigs.

At this announcement the policemen took off their hats; Mrs Spriggins all but embraced the courier; and her Aunt Sally would actually have done that same to the sergeant of police, had her modesty and the gentleman himself consented. Lieutenant-Colonel M'Intyre wrung Sir Horace warmly by the hand, begged and obtained forgiveness for the manner in which he had behaved, and promised to use his influence at the police-office to procure Sir Horace's liberation, on payment only of the price of the broken lamp; and the whole party that day sat down to dinner in the most perfect unanimity and good-fellowship—so great is the power of a title.

"We must return to London as early as possible, dearest," said Sir Horace Sprigs to his lady, shortly after the cloth had been drawn.

"What! and not visit the lakes? Upon my word, Horatio—I mean, Sir Horace—that's too bad."

"Don't distress yourself, my love. I must return to take possession of my title and estates, if there are any; but, since we have come to Scotland for the purpose of taking a *tower*, next week or so will do."

"My dear husband, you delight me."

"Since you propose to leave us so soon," said the Aunt Sally, "we must take time by the firelock, as Mrs Ramsbottom says—I'll get up a party this very evening. Pray, excuse me, till I write a few cards to some of my most intimate friends. Surely, Colonel, you aint going away," she added, seeing Lieutenant-Colonel M'Intyre rising from the table. "Come, now, do stay and join our party."

"I would, Sall—I mean, ma'am—with the greatest pleasure," said he; "but I have to go into Edinburgh to-night, to consult with my lawyer about my law plea. I'm afraid I'll require to go to London to-morrow."

"What, Colonel!—to London!"

"Ecod!" said the *ci-devant* Spriggins, beginning to see that there was a sort of something between the Lieutenant Colonel and Aunt Sally, "couldn't you wait till next week, and we might all go together; we'll make a nice party. Aunt, won't you go with us for a few days?"

"Oh! Sir Horace, you are very kind; of all the places in the world, I should like to go to London, I'm sure."

"I dont know yet, however, whether I am to go to London for certain," interrupted the Lieutenant-Colonel, having it in contemplation to proceed alone, and then he could, for economy's sake, go round by Hull.

"Oh! nonsense; you *must* come; and, what's more, you must come with us," said Aunt Sally, as she pressed his hand affectionately at the door, on his going out.

"We'll see! we'll see!" was the reply; "I'll let you know to-morrow evening." And the blue-bearded gentleman departed.

Lieutenant-Colonel M'Intyre had come to the Lowlands some time prior to the year 1800, when he was but a lad. Like many of his brethren of the north, he had not at that time a penny he could call his own, and his knowledge of English was limited. By some means or other, he contrived to obtain a commission, and served some time in Spain. He then returned to his native country, with the rank of Major, and a much wealthier man than when he had gone from it. Where he had procured this wealth was a subject of deep speculation among those who had known him in former days; and there were some who did not scruple to attribute its conquest, with what semblance of truth we know not, to his having, while in Spain, feigned sickness on one occasion prior to an engagement, by which means he was left in command of the wounded; and the moment any of them died, there he was, rifling their knapsacks of whatever was valuable.

For a considerable time after his return home, the Major lived in a state of perfect quiescence upon his half-pay, subscribing to missionary society funds, and attending to the management of a troop of yeomanry; which command had entitled him to the appellation of Lieutenant-Colonel. However, having received intelligence that his elder brother, Alexander, who had absconded from Scotland some forty years before, leaving a wife and child to the quips and cranks of fortune, was now one of the chief merchants of New York, he proceeded to America, and, somehow or other, coaxed his brother to sell off all his large estates, with the view of returning with him to Scotland. That instant they were sold, the Lieutenant-Colonel got possession of the purchase money, and remitted it home to a friend, for the purpose of being placed in a bank at interest to his own credit. When the elder brother had thus been despoiled of everything, the brave officer threatened to leave him in an alms-house, unless he would sign a paper in which he disponed all his effects, amounting to about forty thousand pounds, to him, for the sum of four hundred a-year—in that case he would be allowed to return to Scotland. There being no other alternative, the old man acceded, but he did not live to enjoy his four hundred a-year, for, on his passage home, he was seized with a fit which carried him off.

The wife of the brother of the Lieutenant-Colonel had, it was supposed, been dead some years. On the desertion of her husband, she did not well know what to do. Her sister, who was married to a wine merchant in Leith, took her daughter under charge, educated, and brought her up. In due time she got married, and died in giving birth to a son.

Seven years after her husband's disappearance, Lieutenant-Colonel M'Intyre introduced to her notice a cousin of his own, who alleged that her husband was dead; and, shortly afterwards, by the Lieutenant Colonel's advice, she gave her hand to this man. Both husbands' names were alike. Years rolled on; her second husband was taken suddenly ill, and, before he died, informed her that her first husband was still alive, and that Lieutenant-Colonel M'Intyre had bribed him to tell the tale he did, and marry her, for the purpose of creating himself heir-at-law to his brother—it being the Lieutenant-Colonel's intention, should her daughter at any time dispute his title to his brother's succession, to swear that the father of the girl was her second husband. At this intelligence, Mrs M'Intyre was horror-struck. For months afterwards, she lay upon the bed of sickness, and her recovery was despaired of. At length, however, she did recover, but reason had been shaken on its throne: at times, her mind was apt to wander. Her sister, now a widow, received her into her house, and allotted her an apartment, from which she seldom passed. Hers was a grief could bear no consolation.

Through his own exertions, her grandson had obtained a clerkship in a mercantile house in Edinburgh; and there was every probability of his soon becoming a partner in the concern. He—having learned the story of his grandsire's wrongs—commenced an action-at-law against the Lieutenant-Colonel for recovery of the estates. At the period of our history, this action was, and had been for some time, depending before the Court of Session; and it was concerning this that the Lieutenant-Colonel left Mrs Biggleswade's, to go to Edinburgh, on the evening of her party.

The clock had just gone seven, when into Mrs Biggleswade's drawing-room there entered, and variously arranged themselves, a lot of people. There were Mr Swallowtail and Mrs Swallowtail, Mr Snooks from London, Captain Muttonfist the famous amateur singer, and many others too numerous to mention, including a choice assortment of young misses, redolent of bread and butter, just fresh from the boarding-school, and some lads to match, with incipient whiskers and a good share of self-conceit—brought there for the purpose of being partners to the aforesaid young misses in "the gay quadrille." Then there were Mrs Biggleswade, and Sir Horace Spriggs, and Lady Spriggs. Tea and coffee were brought in by the maid-servant, and handed round; and then the young ladies were brought out by the young men with incipient whiskers, and also handed round, to the measure of "Hart's Quadrilles." And there was plenty of gabble, among the old, the young, and the middle-aged.

The first set of quadrilles over, there came into the room a tallish young man, with a "goose look" and extensive whitey-brown whiskers. He was dressed in a port-wine-coloured coat of the Victoria breed, studded with brass buttons; and there was about him an air of extreme contentment with himself. He walked stiffly and erectly, just like an animated representation in wax, by Gagliardi, of Louis XIV.; yet—singular coincidence!—his name was the same as that once borne by one of those unfortunates who fell a victim to the execrable Burke. His name was Mr James Wilson, which he himself was in the habit of pronouncing "Weelson." A very fine man he was for a small tea-party.

"Ah, Mr Wilson!" said Aunt Sally, rising, and shaking his extended hand, "how are you?—and how are your father and mother?"

"Yes!" cried Mr Snooks from London, aloud—"how's your mother?"

At this very witty sally, everybody in Mr Snooks' vicinity laughed until they cried.

"I am much obliged to you for your kind inquiries," responded Mr Weelson, pretending not to have observed Snooks; "but I fear they are both dead."

"Dead!" exclaimed the lady. "Impossible!—why, I saw them both in excellent health yesterday morning!"

"That is—I—ah!—I *imagine* they must be dead; for I left them eating pease with their knives—and they must have cut their throats by this time!"

"You're a shocking man!" said Aunt Sally, tapping his cheek with her fan. And, as she went away to talk to some one at the farther end of the room, Mr Wilson seated himself on a footstool beside the sofa, and began talking to a young lady upon it, who was fondling a lap-dog.

"Well, ma'am," said he, "you may say as you like, but I admire the Victoria cut of a coat amazingly. This is one I have on—cost me four guineas—only think!"

"La!" said the young lady, seemingly surprised.

"Yes," continued he, "cost me four guineas. Didn't pay it out of my own pocket, though. The governor settles all these things. Ha, ha, ha!" And he laughed long and loud, thinking he had said a very witty thing. "By the by," he went on, after a pause, "how much do you think my tailor's account amounted to last year? Now, guess."

"I can't, upon my word!" said the young lady, rather good-naturedly.

"Eighty-four pounds, some odds! Ain't I an extravagant fellow? Bought a riding-whip t'other day—cost me nine pounds sixteen! What do you think of that?"

"Indeed, sir," was the meek reply, "I don't know what to think."

"I dare say that. Very few know what to think of me—I'm such a devilish clever fellow. Pretty dog that—very nice creature!" observed he, in continuation, patting the lap-dog on her knee.

"And so handsome, too!" suggested the young lady.

"So am I, my dear. The ladies invariably say so."

"Do they?" said a young man, with bright eyes and a high forehead, habited in sable, who had been an unintentional listener for the last two minutes. "You must allow, however, that there is a slight difference between you and this little animal."

"Indeed?" said the astonished Wilson, inquiringly.

"Yes; he is a full-grown dog, and you only an overgrown puppy."

"What d'ye mean, sir?" asked Mr Wilson, rising. "You shall hear from me, sir—won't stand this. Coffee for two and pistols for one—I mean—psha! you know what I mean. You shall hear from me to-morrow morning, sir."

Mr Wilson then strode majestically out of the room; and the young man never did hear from him.

"Don't be surprised, now," said Aunt Sally to Lady Sprigs, during the performance of a quadrille by some of the minors—"Don't be surprised if you see a lady in deep mourning enter the room."

"A lady in deep mourning in a ball-room! That would be odd!"

"The lady herself is an odd person—no less than my sister Margaret. You know she's much older than I and your mother."

"Your sister! Why, aunt, I thought she was dead a long while since."

"Dead! No; not she. She only lives in retirement; and has done so for years—seeing no one but me or the servant who takes up her food. For years she has not crossed the threshold of the outer door. This evening, however, she has taken it into her head to join the revellers. One cause for this is, that she wishes to look upon her niece."

"Indeed!"

"But mum! here she is!"

The room door had opened, and Mrs Biggleswade's sister, in deep mourning, entered. She curtsied gracefully to the company, casting a wild look around her. In due form she was introduced to Lady and Sir Horace Sprigs, and she sat down between them and entered into conversation, while Mrs Biggleswade went about finding partners for the young ladies in the next quadrille.

"Mr Snooks' song! Mr Snooks' song!" was the cry of one from the particular corner in which Mr Snooks was ensconced. Mr Snooks pleaded a cold—begged to be excused, &c. &c. &c., until Mrs Biggleswade herself asked him; then, after some preliminary hems, he gave utterance to the parody of the "York-house Boy," which, of course, was very much applauded. Then Captain Muttonfist, having exhibited signs of a wish to vocalize also, Mr Snooks, who, when once in was never done, signified that he and the Captain would sing the Canadian Boat Song—that eternal Canadian Boat Song!—if another would join them.

"Come, George," said Mrs Biggleswade, to the young man with bright eyes, before remarked, "you can take a part in that song."

"Indeed, ma'am, I'd rather not," whispered he, aside to Mrs Biggleswade.

"Pooh, nonsense! Now, George—Mr Ramsay, I mean," she added, aloud, "Mr Snooks and Mr Muttonfist are ready to begin."

There being no remede, George, as Mrs Biggleswade called him, was forced to chime in with the afore-mentioned gentlemen; who certainly uttered a palpable "terradiddle" when they sang

"Our voices keep *time*, and our oars keep *tune*."

"Pray," said George Ramsay, addressing Captain Mut

tonfist, on the termination of their exertions—"Pray, sir, were you singing first or second?"

"Umph! I can't exactly say."

"Oh, yes! I observe—a something between the two—a sort of promiscuous singing."

"Just so!" replied the Captain.

At this crisis the dancers were again in motion; and the interest excited by them put a stop to the further colloquy of George and the Captain.

The evening thus wore on. A pretty girl was seated at the piano—as pretty a one as ever graced a ball-room—she had just ceased singing that beautiful German air, known in our country by the title of "Teach me to forget."

"Ay, ay," said the lady in black, ceasing to talk with the Sprigses; "that suits my fancy best. This heart and sorrow have long been acquainted. Girl!" she said, rising, and placing her hand upon the shoulder of Miss Raymond, "you are comely—you are fair to look upon—beware! Trust not the vows of man; he will deceive you: then what will be your lot? A gnawing grief, too deep for tears!—a heart, like mine, quite withered—withered!"—So saying, she paced from the apartment.

Her gratuitous prognostications regarding the fate of Miss Raymond had left that young lady deluging her pocket-handkerchief with tears, and had considerably depressed the spirits of the rest of the company. Indeed, from the mysterious lady's first entrance into the room, a damp seemed to have been thrown upon them all, no one could tell how. Even Mr. Snooks had ceased to be funny with his second-hand jokes, pillaged from the "Carlton Chronicle." Gradually their smiles and merriment died away; and soon after supper—for nothing could induce the majority to forego that—every one took his departure, very much dissatisfied with himself, and none more so than Captain Muttonfist, as he had never been asked to sing a solo, after having calculated on an encore.

Sir Horace Sprigs alone remained in the banquet-hall. His "courage was out;" and desiring the servant to inform Lady Sprigs that he would be with her in a few minutes, he also took his departure, intent upon having a refreshing walk along the sea-shore—a very excellent thing to one who has been mewed up all the evening in a drawing-room among ladies and gentlemen who talk small.

The night was beautiful. There was not a breath of air stirring—not a sound to break upon its stillness. The "busy hum and shock of men" had ceased; all Portobello seemed wrapt in profound repose, as Sir Horace Sprigs passed down its streets. "Stars innumerably bright" studded the vault of heaven: and on passing by the old tower, and stepping on to the beach, Sir Horace, for the first time, descried the Aurora Borealis revelling in the northern sky. The sea was calm and clear: yet, save the rippling of its waves upon the shore, here too a solemn stillness held. Great was the contrast between the appearance of the same scene at that time, and in the full blaze of day. There were now no nurses with infants in their arms; no old gentlemen and ladies with telescopes; no young gentlemen and ladies playing at bo-peep in the water; no little boys playing about their mammas' knees, and digging holes in the sand; no, there were none of these—the beach was quite deserted.

Sir Horace sauntered along, enjoying the cool amazingly, ever and anon stopping to knock the loose sand out of his shoes. Unconsciously he found himself withinside the dilapidated wall of that which is styled "the harbour." He stopped, and a slight tremor passed through his frame, upon observing a figure leaning against that part of it which overhangs the shore; but instantly recovering himself, he advanced.

"Well met, friend," said Sir Horace. "'Tis a delightful night."

"It is, indeed," was the reply; and the voice of the speaker came upon Sir Horace's ear as one that was not unfamiliar.

"How bright the stars are!" continued Sir Horace, after a slight pause, for want of something better to say. The person addressed now turned full round; and Sir Horace, to his infinite satisfaction, discovered that it was, as he had imagined, one whom he had before met—it was the young man with the bright eyes, whom Mrs. Biggleswade had called "George," and whose non-appearance at the supper table had created no inconsiderable sensation.

"Ah!" said Sir Horace, "I'm glad I have met you, What a pleasant thing it is to find an acquaintance, where one only expected to meet a stranger!"

"Very!" was the laconic rejoinder.

"But, my dear sir, what took you off in such a devil of a hurry?—we were all quite disconsolate without you."

"Pshaw! I was unwell—I could not be bothered. Your pardon, sir—I am apt to be ruffled in my temper;" and he extended his hand to Sir Horace, who wrung it cordially. "Hark!" continued he, "did I not hear voices on the shore?"

"I fancy not!" said Sir Horace. "'Tis only the clock sounding the hour of one."

"Hush! There are persons below the wall."

Sir Horace threw himself into an attitude of listening; and felt convinced that George Ramsay was not wrong.

"Ha!" exclaimed he, *sotto voce*, "it is the voice of that villain, M'Intyre, and that pettifogging attorney of his, M'Sweyne! It can't be good that brings them here at this hour."

"Are you aware, though," said one of the voices below the wall, which George had recognised as belonging to M'Sweyne—"are you aware whether there was another will executed?"

"To be surely; I know that there was a will made out by my brother, ten years ago, in favour of his daughter. When in America, I sought everywhere among his repositories for it, but in vain. At all events, there's little chance of it coming against us here. But really, Mr M'Sweyne, you've done the new will excellently—my brother's signature is most complete."

"Ay, ay!" was the rejoinder. "I will defy old Scratch himself to detect that it's a forgery, unless you or I give him the information. Ha! ha! ha!"—and the fellow laughed at his own conceit.

"Come, come, M'Sweyne, hold your whisht—somebody may hear us."

"Nonsense, man! there's not a soul astir at this hour—pooh!"—here the sound of their voices died away in the distance.

Sir Horace Sprigs looked to George, and George looked to Sir Horace Sprigs during this colloquy, without uttering a word. No sooner, however, had the sound of retiring footsteps ceased, than George exclaimed—"Here is a pretty discovery!—zounds! I'll have the fellows hung for the forgery, if there's law in the land. Sir Horace Sprigs, you are a witness."

"Hoy! ahoy! what cheer, messmates?"

The owner of the voice which effected these exclamations appeared through a chasm in the wall, immediately below where George and Sir Horace were standing, in the person of a sailor, evidently carrying more ballast, in the shape of grog, than was sufficient to keep him steady. He approached Sir Horace:—

"I say, you swab," quoth he, "can you shew me the way to Leith? Come, now, don't take it amiss my axing you—I'm Dick Marlinspike—everybody knows Dick—boatswain of the Fantod, plying between Liverpool and New York. My captain says to me, no later than the day

before yesterday—'Dick,' says he, 'you want three days' leave, don't you?' 'Yes, your Honour,' says I, 'I wants to go to see my brother-in-law in Leith.' 'Then, Dick,' says he, 'you can go; but, mind be back again on Friday, as we sail for New York the first fair wind after; and,' says he, 'when you're in Scotland at any rate, seek out one Mr George Ram'—Ramsay, I think he called it. And, it's this Mr Ramsay I've been seeking all day about Edinburgh, to give him a small parcel from my captain; and, you see, being tired, I went and got some grog, and, d——, if I can find my way back to Leith again!"

My good fellow," said Sir Horace, "you are a good way from either Edinburgh or Leith."

"Don't I know that, your Honour?—and don't I want the information from you, you lubber? Confound Mr Ramsay, say I!"

"Ramsay!" cried George—"a packet for one George Ramsay—quick, give it me?"

"I daresay you'd like," observed Dick. "Mayhap, you're awanting to do me out of it!"

"Nay, nay, my good fellow! *I* am Mr Ramsay."

"Oh! That's another story—couldn't you have said so at first?" And taking off his glazed hat, Dick extracted a small parcel from the interior of it.

"It is indeed for me," said George, hastily undoing the fastening. In his hurry a paper fell from it, which Sir Horace stooped to lift. Holding it up, he read aloud—"The will of Alexander M'Intyre, Esq., of New York, in favour of his daughter."

"Merciful Providence!" exclaimed George, "can this be? It is—it is my grandfather's signature!"

"Your grandfather!"

"Yes, Sir Horace, I am the grandson of Alexander M'Intyre; and, sorry am I to add, the grand-nephew of the Lieutenant-Colonel."

"I am partly acquainted with your grandfather's story," said Sir Horace. "I had some detached portions communicated to me this evening; but, until now, I knew not that the grandson of Alexander M'Intyre and George Ramsay were one and the same."

"Communicated to you this evening!—by whom, may I ask?"

"Partly by Mrs Biggleswade, partly by the lady in mourning."

"The lady in mourning! I must inquire as to this." They then left the shore.

The other contents of the packet, so mysteriously conveyed to the right owner, were a letter signed, "Frederick Hutchison, captain of the Fantod," in which that gentleman communicated to Mr George Ramsay, the circumstance of his grandfather having died in that vessel; and, ere his breath had flown, made Captain Hutchison the depository of his will, to be forwarded to Scotland the first opportunity.

It was about nine o'clock on the following evening that, as Lady Sprigs, Mrs Biggleswade, and her sister, the lady in mourning, were seated in a back parlour in Brighton Place, Lieutenant-Colonel M'Intyre was announced.

"Now is your time, Margaret," said Mrs Biggleswade to her sister; "retire behind yonder curtain." Agreeably to her instructions, the lady in mourning ensconced herself in the embrasure of the window, directly behind the curtain, and Mrs Biggleswade and Lady Sprigs made their exit at a side door.

Lieutenant-Colonel M'Intyre was scarcely seated, when Sir Horace Sprigs entered the room, followed by George Ramsay.

"Ah, Colonel," said Sir Horace, "how are you? Allow me to introduce a young friend of mine."

"Eh! what!" cried the Lieutenant-Colonel. "How's this? How dare you, you young scapegrace, enter a house where I am!" The latter part of this sentence was addressed to his relation, George.

"'Much daring there is about it,' as the man in the play says, Colonel M'Intyre. But, a truce to jocularity; we are here upon business of a serious import."

"Business!" ejaculated the Colonel. "What business can *you* possibly have with me?"

"Why, Colonel," interposed Sir Horace, "it is this. Do you expect that a court of law will authorize you to cheat your niece out of her patrimony?"

"Cheat!" exclaimed the astonished Lieutenant Colonel. "Have a care what you say, Sir Horace—I cheat no one!"

"I understand," observed George, "you only *take* another's property without his consent."

"Sir, this is language I don't understand. If you mean anything, all I can reply is that, by my brother's will, all his estates are made over to me. Nay, more, I have his written agreement with me, to give up all he had, for the sum of four hundred a-year."

"Very good, sir. A man in his senses give up property amounting to forty thousand pounds, for the sum of four hundred a-year! Nonsense, man!—do you think I'm to be done by such a paltry artifice?"

"Here is the will—let any man dispute my right!" cried the Lieutenant-Colonel, waxing wroth, and producing a will written in his favour.

"Hem!" remarked George Ramsay, after minutely scrutinizing the document, "doesn't it look rather like a forgery?"

"A wh—wh—at! Take care what you say, fellow!"

"Look here," said George, holding the will before the candle, and displaying the watermark. "Why, man, this will is dated two years before the paper was made. And, more, there was a will executed by your brother, by which all was left to your niece—my mother!"

"'Tis false—'tis false as hell—that will——"

"Is here!" cried Sir Horace, holding up the document.

"Villains! you have robbed me; but, by heaven, you shall not foil me so easily." And he rushed upon Sir Horace Sprigs, making an attempt to gain possession of the will.

"Never!" said George, firmly.

Finding that his efforts to obtain possession of either of the wills, would be attended with disappointment, if not danger, he took his hat with as much calmness as he could muster, and hurried to the door; but George had provided against that being used as a means of escape, by securing the key. Foiled in that direction, he flew towards the window, and, drawing the curtains aside, the lady in mourning was discovered in the recess. She advanced as he retreated.

"Margaret M'Intyre!" he exclaimed. "The very grave seems leagued against me to give up its dead. Mercy! mercy!" and he fell back on the carpet, fainting.

When sufficiently recovered, he confessed his villany with regard to the will, upon George Ramsay vowing not to blazon it to the world, provided he would retire to some far distant land. Mrs Biggleswade took to her bed for the space of eight days after these transactions, swearing never to put faith in mankind more—whether she has kept her oath, yet remains to be seen.

THE DUEL

The military arrangements, on the part of the government, which succeeded the battle of Culloden, included the quartering of fifty men of the —— regiment of foot in the little hamlet of Kilmaroonan, in the West Highlands; the purpose of their being so placed, we need hardly say, being at once to suppress, by their presence, any further attempts at disturbing the peace of the country, and to apprehend those unhappy fugitives who might still be lingering about their native hills and fastnesses. This party was commanded by a Captain Ingoldsby—a young Englishman of good family and fortune. He was a remarkably handsome man—of gentlemanly manners and excellent dispositions—humane, generous, and brave; in short, altogether what a young soldier ought to be.

The duty on which Captain Ingoldsby was sent to Kilmaroonan was, to him, an especially unpleasant one. He felt deeply for the unhappy people on whom he was employed to visit the wrath of an offended government, for their political sins; but he found a consolation in being able to mitigate the punishment he was called on to inflict. He was too much a man of honour not to discharge faithfully—however painful to his own individual feelings it might be—the duty imposed on him and expected from him; but he performed this duty, in all cases, as mildly and gently as the nature of circumstances would permit. He would allow of no unnecessary harshness or cruelty on the part of his soldiers; and thus, by his own individual exertions, greatly tempered the severity of the injunctions with which he was charged. The principal duty of Captain Ingoldsby was to trace out and apprehend fugitives—meaning, of course, by this, those who had been "out" in the rebellion; and, in order to facilitate his proceedings in this way, he was furnished with a list of the names and descriptions of some score of persons who stood in this unhappy predicament—all men of some consideration. Amongst these was a James Stewart, the only son of a Mr John Stewart of Strathfinnan—a considerable property in the neighbourhood of Kilmaroonan. The old man himself had held entirely aloof from all share in the rebellion; indeed, he was rather suspected of a leaning towards the side of government, notwithstanding of his name and country. However this may be, it is certain that the worthy laird of Strathfinnan—for he was a man of a kind, hospitable, and generous nature—took no part whatever in the rebellion which had just closed on the field of Culloden. Not so his son, however, a high-spirited young man of about five-and-twenty years of age. Burning with the martial ardour of his race, and deeply imbued with a sense of the wrongs of an injured prince, he joined the ranks of the Pretender, in which he obtained a lieutenant's commission, and followed all his fortunes till the day of their total overthrow, when he found himself a proscribed fugitive in his native land—a homeless wanderer, on whose head a price was set.

As the unfortunate young man's name stood amongst the first on Captain Ingoldsby's fatal list, amongst the first places he visited, in the discharge of the duty which had brought him to Kilmaroonan, was Strathfinnan. On the very next day after his arrival at the former place, he proceeded to the latter, with a party of twelve men, in order to search the house and its premises for young Stewart. On arriving within a short distance of the house, which was a very handsome one, and beautifully situated on the face of the gentle acclivity which overlooked the strath below, Captain Ingoldsby halted his men, for a moment, in a small hollow which concealed them from view; and, shortly addressing them, told them of the nature of the duty on which they were going, and enjoined them to conduct themselves with propriety and civility to the inmates of the house. Having thus cautioned his men as to their future proceedings, he put them again in motion; and, in the next minute, entered, at their head, the little ornamental domain through which the house was approached. He was met at the door by Mr Stewart, who politely raised his hat. Captain Ingoldsby returned the compliment, and said—

"I have come on a very unpleasant duty, Mr Stewart, and I beg of you to believe that I find it so; but you will, I am sure, make every allowance for the imperative nature of my service."

"Undoubtedly, sir, undoubtedly," replied Mr Stewart, smilingly—for he had no occasion to fear the result of the impending search, as he had, but the day before, learned that his son had succeeded, with several others, in getting on board a vessel bound for France, and was now, it was to be presumed, on his way to that country—"Undoubtedly," said Mr Stewart. "You are but in the discharge of your duty, sir, which it would be unreasonable of me to resent. So far from this, myself and all my servants will afford you every facility for your proceedings; and I will feel particularly gratified if, when these are concluded, you will accept of some refreshment for yourself and men."

Captain Ingoldsby bowed, thanked Mr Stewart for his kindness, and said he would, with pleasure, accept of his hospitality. This the latter the more readily did, that, notwithstanding the business he came upon, previous information had led him to look on his inviter rather in the light of a friend to government than an enemy. Captain Ingoldsby and his party now proceeded to search the house; and, while they were doing so, Mr Stewart again addressed the former, and said, good-humouredly—

"I would willingly save you and your men all this trouble, captain, by stating to you, on my honour, that my son is not, at this moment, within a hundred miles of my house, but that I cannot expect that you should take my word on such a subject."

"I assure you," said Captain Ingoldsby, "you cannot have more satisfaction in the circumstance you mention regarding your son than I have. I can have no pleasure in being instrumental in adding to the sufferings of the unfortunate."

"I sincerely believe you, sir," replied Mr Stewart.

In the meantime, the search went on; Captain Ingoldsby, of course, not feeling warranted in abating, much less suspending that proceeding, on the faith of the representation which had just been made him regarding its object.

From searching the house itself, the party proceeded to subject the premises and neighbouring grounds to the same

active and vigilant surveillance; but with no result. They neither found him they sought, nor anything to excite a suspicion of his being either in the house or its vicinity.

On the search being concluded, Mr Stewart reminded Captain Ingoldsby of his promise to accept of some refreshment; when the latter, acknowledging his recollection of the circumstance, was conducted into a very handsomely furnished parlour—his men at the same time, being shewn the way to the kitchen by a domestic—where he found a plentiful repast of cold fowl, kippered salmon, &c. &c., ready spread out for him, as if—which was indeed the case—it had been put in preparation, by Mr Stewart's order, while the search was going on.

Well pleased, however, as Captain Ingoldsby was, at the sight of all those good things, coming, as they did, after a pretty fatiguing march, followed by a tedious and protracted duty, and gratified as he was by the kind and considerate hospitality which had been so promptly and seasonably furnished them, they yet afforded him but small pleasure compared with that he felt when, appearing at her father's summons, Miss Eliza Stewart entered the apartment which was to be the scene of the little approaching refection. And well might the sight of this interesting girl affect the young soldier with pleasurable emotions; for he had never looked on face so fair, or figure so elegant in all its symmetrical proportions. Mild and gentle in look and expression, her manner completed the favourable impression which her beauty first imparted; and on the ear of Captain Ingoldsby, as they did on all, fell the silvery tones of her voice, like

"A melody that's sweetly played in tune."

Never, altogether, had so fair a vision crossed the ravished eyes of the young soldier; and never till that moment had he felt such emotions as those that were now thrilling through his veins. It was love—love, at first sight—deep and enduring love. We may not say that this feeling was reciprocated; that Captain Ingoldsby's fair, but unconscious enslaver, owned similar sensations; but we may say that she did not look with indifference on the handsome young soldier, nor contemplate his fine manly countenance and brilliant eye without an involuntary acknowledgment of their power.

Yet, however slight might have been the impressions—if they were indeed slight—which Captain Ingoldsby's first appearance made on the heart of Miss Stewart, the hour's conversation which followed found her under the influence of much stronger feelings regarding that person. That hour's conversation, in short, brought to her the conviction that she had at length met—for she had never done so before—the man whom she could love. The pleasing manners of her father's new guest; the accomplishments of which he incidentally discovered that he was master; and, above all, the liberality of the sentiments he expressed when occasion elicited them, carried his image every moment deeper and deeper into the secret recesses of Eliza's heart, there to remain, and be treasured up amongst its most imperishable affections.

It was when this short hour of unexpected happiness had fled, and just as Captain Ingoldsby had risen to his feet to take his departure, that Miss Stewart, approaching him with a smile and a blush, said—

"I fear, captain, you will find reason, ere you have been long in this wild quarter of the world, to consider it a cruel order that sent you to it."

"That, Miss Stewart, I never can do," replied the latter, taking her respectfully but affectionately by the hand, and speaking with an earnestness of which he was not himself aware; "seeing that it has been the means of procuring me the happiness of meeting with *you*." Miss Stewart's father was not in the room at this moment. He had gone out an instant before, to inform the soldiers below in the kitchen, that their officer was about to depart; and probably it was his absence that encouraged Ingoldsby to the warmth of language he had used, and to the earnestness of manner by which it was accompanied. Probably, likewise, we ought to attribute to the same cause the silent confusion—silent, but strongly expressive of gratified feeling—which Miss Stewart permitted herself to exhibit, in reply, as it were, to what had just been said to her.

"One word more, Miss Stewart, before we part," now said Ingoldsby, in a low, rapid, and intensely earnest, but agitated tone, as if at once hurried away by his new-born passion, and eager to make the most of the few moments which they should be left together alone. "One word more," he said, and still holding his fair companion by the hand—"May I hope—may I dare to presume to ask the favour of being permitted to become a frequent visiter at Strathfinnan?"

"Most assuredly, sir!" replied Eliza, blushing deeply and hardly knowing what she said. "My father will be most happy, at all times, to see you."

"And will not you, too, Miss Stewart?" inquired Captain Ingoldsby, in a tone of disappointment; but, ere an answer could be returned, Mr Stewart had entered the apartment.

"Now, Captain Ingoldsby," said the latter, who had been highly delighted with the manners and with the intelligence of his guest, "you will not, I hope, refuse me the favour I am going to ask you?"

"Certainly not, sir," replied Ingoldsby, "if it be in my power, as I know you will ask no favour that it would not become a gentleman to grant."

"I hope not—I hope not," replied Mr Stewart; "but the favour I am going to ask you is, that you will come to see us as often as you can, and give us as much of your time as you may think our society worth. We will do all we can to give you value in return."

Need we, gentle reader, after what we have said regarding the feelings of Captain Ingoldsby and Miss Stewart, say how gladly the former promised to avail himself of the kind invitation now given him—an invitation which held out to him so large a prospect of happiness, in the opportunities it would afford him of enjoying the society of her who, he already felt, was dearer to him than ever woman had been?

As, to all but lovers themselves, the process of love-making is one of the most insipid things imaginable, we shall take the liberty of passing over the earlier stages of that now in progress with the hero and heroine of our tale, and at once bring up the period to the third month of their acquaintance. We may, however, say that, during this interval, Captain Ingoldsby was an almost daily visiter at Strathfinnan; and that the longer and the better he was known by its inmates, the more was he beloved—the more esteemed and respected for the qualities of both his head and heart. He was now the acknowledged suitor of Miss Eliza Stewart; and was looked upon, by her father at least, in the light of the future husband of his daughter. With regard to Captain Ingoldsby himself, he was one of the happiest of men, and this happiness he found in the society of his beloved Eliza. It was not, however, we must add, altogether without alloy; but that alloy proceeded from external circumstances. He had received hints from various quarters, that his correspondence with Strathfinnan had reached the ears of his superiors, and had given great dissatisfaction. These hints greatly annoyed Ingoldsby, and disturbed the dream of bliss in which he was indulging; but his attachment was too deep-rooted to permit of their altering for a moment the course which he had determined to pursue with regard to that attachment. He was, moreover, independent in circumstances, and felt that he had ample resources to fall back upon, in case his superiors should think fit to visit him with their extremest displeasure. He, in short, determined on resigning his com-

mission rather than his love, should he be reduced to such an alternative.

There was one point in the correspondence which was now in progress between Captain Ingoldsby and Mr Stewart's family which it may be interesting enough to notice —this was the silence maintained on both sides regarding young Stewart, and the part he had taken in the late disturbances. It was a subject carefully and studiously avoided oy both. On the part of Mr Stewart and his daughter, from an idea that there would be an impropriety in making a gentleman who held a commission in the King's service, a party to any conversation on a matter which placed his duty and his feelings in such painful opposition to each other. Captain Ingoldsby, again, refrained from all allusion to the subject, from motives of delicacy towards Eliza and her father, whom, he felt, it could only involve in an awkward embarrassment to refer to. Both parties, in short, felt that it was an unfit subject of conversation between them; and by mutual, although tacit consent, never, in any instance, alluded to it. Captain Ingoldsby, however, learned enough, incidentally, at his visits to Strathfinnan, and more directly from others, regarding young Stewart, to impress him with the highest opinion of the brother of Eliza, and to inspire him with the strongest sentiments of esteem and respect for his character and abilities.

To return to the progress of the events which form the basis of our story. At the end of the three months formerly alluded to, Captain Ingoldsby made, with the consent of her father, whom he had previously consulted, a formal offer of his hand to Miss Stewart. It was accepted, and a day for the celebration of their marriage shortly after condescended upon.

Part of the arrangements connected with this event were, that Ingoldsby should, after his marriage, resign his commission. On this step he had resolved, at once to release himself from the painful position in which he stood as an officer in the king's army—in relation not only to his future brother-in-law, but to many other friends of the family with which he was about to connect himself, who stood in a similar predicament—and to anticipate a dismissal from the service, which, from what he had learned, he deemed by no means an improbable occurrence. Another part of the arrangements connected with the approaching marriage, was, that, as soon as convenient after the ceremony, the young bride should accompany her husband on a visit to his relations in England, and that they should finally settle in that country.

It was now within somewhat less than a week of the day fixed on for the nuptials, when Miss Stewart was suddenly startled at a late hour of the night—as she sat in her own room, the window of which was on a level with the ground outside—by some one tapping gently on the glass. Great, however, as was her alarm at this extraordinary visitation, Miss Stewart hastened to the window, undid the shutters, and recognised her brother! A shriek of mingled joy and surprise intimated the violent excitation which this unexpected appearance of so near and dear a relative had occasioned. Eliza now rushed out of the house; and, in the next instant, her brother was in her arms, and she enfolded in his. It was a bright moonlight night; and this meeting took place on the little lawn in front of the house.

"We thought, James," said Miss Stewart, after her first emotions had a little subsided, "that you had gone to France. We were informed of this by those whom we could not doubt."

"Your information, Eliza, dear, was so far correct," replied her brother. "We embarked for France; but, after having got to sea, we were seen by a sloop of war, and chased. We had therefore nothing for it but to run in for the land again; and, as the vessel still continued in pursuit of us, we were obliged to take to the shore in our boat, and to seek refuge once more amongst the hills, from which we soon after saw the unfortunate little vessel—which we had hoped, a few hours before, would have borne us out of the reach of the blood-hounds—sunk by several shots from the ship of war. Since then, we have been wandering from place to place; sleeping in woods and caves; and picking up a living as we might. I at length determined on coming to see you and my father at whatever risk, and come of it what might—and here I am, Eliza," said the warm-hearted young man, again taking his sister in his arms, and imprinting on her lips a kiss of the fondest and holiest affection. "But, Eliza, dear," he suddenly said, "for this night, at any rate, our interview must be short; I am now like a hunted deer, and must, if I would save my head, seek the covert of the woods and the glens. I must to a hiding-place, Eliza, directly; for I saw, as I came along by Sloomorran, a party of the red-coats, who seemed to be coming in this direction."

"O James! James! why did you expose yourself to this danger. O God! hide! hide directly then, my dear brother!" exclaimed his sister, distractedly, and now, for the first time, reflecting on the peril to which his visit exposed him.

"Hush, hush, Eliza!—take it all easy. I know a corner where all the noses of all the blood-hounds in Scotland will not scent me out. Do you recollect the little cave on the face of Benourin, where you and I, when children, used to hide ourselves, in sport, from those who sought us?"

Eliza at once recollected the place alluded to, and readily acknowledged that it was, indeed, a very secure retreat. It was now, then, agreed between Stewart and his sister, that, as there was imminent danger of a visit from the party of military whom the former had seen, Stewart should, for the present, retire to the hiding-place he spoke of, and which was at a distance only of about a quarter of a mile; that he should there remain till communication could safely be held with him; and that arrangements should thereafter be made to provide for his comfort to the utmost extent that circumstances would allow.

These matters briefly discussed—for Stewart believed there was not a moment to lose—he embraced his sister, gathered his plaid about him, and hastened away—his sister retiring into the house. Stewart, however, had not gone far—not above a hundred yards—when he found himself suddenly confronted by a young man in a military dress, who, in tones of fierce and passionate agitation, called on him to stop and defend himself; at the same time drawing his own sword, and placing himself in an attitude of offence. Confounded by, yet not losing his presence of mind at this alarming interruption, which, from the dress of his antagonist, he at once conceived to be a prelude to his arrest for high treason, Stewart also drew, for he was well armed, and, without one word farther of explanation from either side, the hostile swords were crossed, and a deadly combat ensued.

Being both, however, skilful in the use of their weapons, they fought for some seconds without either sustaining very serious injury, till a sudden twist of Stewart's weapon snapped that of his antagonist in twain. On finding himself thus disarmed, the latter retreated a pace or two, and, drawing a pistol from his belt, demanded whether his opponent was provided with a similar weapon. An answer in the affirmative was followed by the click of a pistol-lock. In the next instant both fired, and both fell mortally wounded. The noise of the fire-arms was heard in the house; and, in the next moment, Mr Stewart, his daughter, and several domestics, were on the fatal spot. And whom did they find? Who were they whom the latter found in the agonies of death on this sanguinary scene? Her brother and her lover; for the opponent of young Stewart

was no other than Ingoldsby. He had been a witness to the meeting between the brother and sister, which had taken place just as he was approaching the house, to seek a lodging for the night, having been out in the hills all day with a party of his men, whom he had quartered in a neighbouring hamlet; and never, for an instant, dreaming that the person whom he saw caressing his betrothed in the way described was her brother, whom he believed to be in France, the demon of jealousy seized him. He believed himself deceived in the dearest hopes of his soul. He became blinded with passion. His brain whirled; his faculties became confused and distracted. He watched, with glaring eye and clenched teeth, from amongst the shrubbery in which he stood concealed, the progress of the interview between his supposed rival and his false fair one—and the consequences were what we have described.

The unfortunate young men were not yet dead, nor even insensible, when those from the house came up, and, therefore, had still time to learn, which they did, from the wild, broken exclamations, uttered in tones of the deepest misery, of the bereaved sister and bride elect—the true relationship in which they stood to each other. On understanding this, they both desired to be brought together. It was done. They grasped each other's hands, in token of mutual forgiveness; and in this attitude, their hands united, they both expired.

JOHNNY REID'S WEDDING.

Up to the period of his fiftieth year, Johnny Reid had lived a life of single blessedness. What this was owing to we cannot tell. Whether to a want of susceptibility to the tender passion, or that our worthy friend, who was a great lover of good living, was too busily employed in the solid, substantial occupation of eating and drinking, to think of directing any part of his attentions to so aerial and shadowy a thing as love, we know not; but rather suspect the latter was the fact. Be this as it may, however, it is certain that, up to the period we have named, Johnny never had been married; and we have reason to believe, also, that, up to the same period, he had contrived to keep himself heart-whole. He had never even been touched; but it was not too late yet. He was still within the reach of the tender influence. His hour was coming—that hour which was to find him acknowledging that there were fairer things in creation than a roasted fillet of veal, (his favourite dish,) and more engrossing feelings than those excited by an invitation to dinner. All this Johnny would have considered heresy at one time; but he was now to think otherwise. Johnny, good reader, fell in love. No—that's not exactly the way to phrase it either: he was smitten with a "sort o' notion," as he would himself have called it, for a buxom widow, who rejoiced in the name of Mrs Monypenny; and the name was a pretty felicitous one, in so far as its application to actual circumstances went; for the good lady was well to do in the world. Her husband, who had been a tobacconist—a business which she still successfully prosecuted—had left her "something neat;" and she was thus a very desirable sort of person for an elderly gentleman, like our friend Johnny Reid, to connect himself with in a matrimonial spec. She was, moreover, under Johnny's survey—Johnny being in the service of his country as an excise officer; and the opportunities which his official duty afforded him, had been sufficiently ample, particular, and minute, to enable him to form a pretty accurate estimate of her character and disposition—both of which he found unexceptionable. It may be thought, however, that such official visits, being in their nature dry and professional, would scarcely have afforded Johnny the opportunities we speak of. Neither they would, but for a particular circumstance. This refers to a hospitable practice of the worthy widow, of invariably inviting Johnny, on such occasions, into her little back parlour, to a glass of brandy and water. We need scarcely say, that Johnny as invariably accepted the invitation; nor that he did every justice to the widow's kindness, by taking his brandy cheerfully and cordially. These, then, more strictly speaking, were the opportunities to which we alluded. Having thus accounted for that sort of intimacy between the parties which usually precedes, in all such cases, the more serious arrangement of matrimonial alliance, we proceed to describe the particular process which our hero pursued in the present instance.

For some time previous to the great denouement of Johnny's designs on the widow, a shrewd observer of the former's general bearing, especially when in the presence of the bewitching fair one, and, more especially again, when they were taking what the widow called their "thimble fu' o' brandy" together, might have discovered certain latent symptoms of the tender feeling which his bosom now owned. He was more cadgy and frisky than usual—the only way in which he could express the new passion that had taken possession of him—while his civilities were mingled with some specimens of gallantry that were at once curious and original. To the general world, however, Johnny continued to appear precisely the same man as before: no difference whatever, excepting, perhaps, in one small particular. This was, in his bestowing an unusual share of attention on his shirt necks. The new spirit with which he was filled did not perceptibly extend to any other portion of his attire, or effect any other very marked change on his general costume. But the shirt necks were certainly better starched than before; and, as certainly pulled fully an inch higher on his face. This, however was too slight a matter to give the world any idea of what was going on; and the world, consequently, knew nothing at all about it. Not so her, however, who was the cause of it. The female eye is quick to detect the incipient fire which it has itself kindled. She marked the gentle approaches of Johnny; and awaited, with becoming grace the conclusion at which she guessed they would arrive. for this she had not long to wait. Johnny was no dawdler over preliminaries; so he soon came to the point.

"Mrs Monypenny," said Johnny, on the occasion of one of those visits to which we a short while since alluded—"Mrs Monypenny," he said, holding up his tumbler between him and the light, and, by a gentle twitch of his hand, making the brandy and water it contained perform the circuit of the goblet, he himself apparently eyeing with interest its rapid revolutions—"I hae been thinkin o' something very particular concernin you an' me this while back."

"Really, Mr Reid," said the widow, colouring, and discovering sundry other symptoms of agitation. "What might that be?"

"Faith, leddy, it's juist this," replied Johnny—who, however, had previously bolted the residue of his brandy and water—"that I think you an' me micht do waur than gang thegither. Eh? What say ye to that, leddy?"

"Fie, fie, Mr Reid, for shame," said the blushing widow averting her head prettily, and gazing on the floor in amiable confusion. "How could ye ever think o' such a thing? What could put such nonsense as that in your head?"

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Johnny; "by my troth, it's nae nonsense, but real even-doon guid sense; rational at baith ends, and sensible in the middle. Noo, Jenny," (our wooer was already becoming familiar,) "noo, Jenny," he added, and taking the widow tenderly by the hand, "will ye tak me or no? Juist say the word at aince, an' let's be dune

wi't. Nae use for driddlin owre't, or bogglin at it either, like a skeigh horse at a gate-post."

"O Mr Reid, ye're sae instant, man," replied the widow, still blushing, and still averting her head. "Can ye no gie a body time to think? It's sic a serious thing for the like o' me, Mr Reid, to change my condition."

"Tuts, serious! What's serious aboot it? Deil a thing that I see! Come, say ay at ance, woman, an' be dune wi't! I'll daut ye like a pet lamb, an' gie ye a' yer ain way. 'Od, ye'll be as happy wi' me as a cat in a tripe shop, or a rat in a corn kist."

"Aweel, I'm sure such a man!" replied the blushing widow, in amiable confusion. "Ye wad wile the laverocks frae the lift. But ye maun gie me a wee time to think. Oh, dear, what's this o't?" And the widow sighed profoundly. "Ye maunna hurry me owre sair. Ye maun gie me time to think. Ye hae fleechin tongues, you men; but ye're a' sad deceivers."

Johnny stoutly denied the fact—at least so far as regarded himself. He allowed that there were some who "did a great deal o' mischief in that way;" but (what was hardly necessary) asserted, on his honour, "that he wasna ane o' that kind."

We need not prolong the sweet conversation that took place, on this eventful night, between Johnny Reid and the amiable Widow Monypenny. Better proceed at once to the catastrophe; and we now do so by mentioning that, before Johnny left the house—nay, before he had finished his second *browst* of brandy and water—he had obtained a gently aspirated consent from the fair widow, to undergo that change of condition which she viewed in so serious a light. Johnny's suit, in short, was triumphant. His eloquence had prevailed; and, not a little proud of his success in this his first essay in the art of wooing womankind, his step, in going home, was unusually light and buoyant, and his whole bearing imbued with an airy gaiety, that contrasted rather queerly with his natural characteristics, both physical and moral. Johnny, in short, evidently aimed at something rakish in his look and manner, on the occasion alluded to; and, to aid in producing this effect, had stuck his hat jauntily on one side. Let us mention, also, that Johnny's success, in the present instance, had inspired other yet more curious feelings. The reader will scarcely guess what these were. They were those of surprise at his own powers of persuasion, and regret that he had not tried their efficacy on some of the fair sex long before.

"Faith, I hae made oot the widow," said Johnny to himself, as he wended his way homewards, making the flag-stones resound with the sharp, firm, confident tread of his boot heels. "I hae made her oot." Then, after a pause, which was filled up with various quick, changing thoughts—"'Od, I wish I had tried this tredd before; but I had nae notion I was sae guid o't. That's the way that mony deservin folk's lost in this world, by no kennin o', or no makin the proper use o' their qualifications."

In the pleasant mood implied by these soothing reflections, the successful wooer reached his own house; and in this pleasant mood, also, he shortly after turned into bed, to dream of the fair Widow Monypenny.

Johnny's first business, on the following day, was to set about making arrangements for the celebration of his own and the widow's marriage; and, having a little spare money past him, he determined on coming down handsomely on the occasion, and doing the thing genteelly. With this view, he invited a numerous party of friends; and, it being part of his plan to carry them all into the country to dine, after the marriage ceremony should be performed, he proposed to hire a suitable number of vehicles for this purpose; which vehicles, it being fine summer weather, he determined should be mostly gigs—Johnny having, besides the reason assigned, a particular fancy for these sort of conveyances. He thought, moreover, that they would have a more showy appearance, on the present occasion, than chaises—be more light and airy, and better adapted for affording a view of the country to their respective occupants.

Having these substantial reasons for his choice in the particular above spoken of, Johnny proceeded to act on that choice by going to a certain acquaintance of his, who kept gigs, chaises, and other sorts of vehicles for hire.

"Is Mr Tamson aboot?" said Johnny to an hostler, whom he found in his friend's yard, in the act of mopping a dirty chaise.

The man glanced at Johnny, touched his hat, and said—"Yes, sir. I'll get him in a moment." Having said this, he ran into one of the stables, and, in little more than the time mentioned, reappeared, accompanied by the person wanted.

"O Mr Reid, is this you?" said Mr Thomson. "What's in the win' the day?"

Johnny blushed. He could not help it; for he fully felt all that sort of annoying embarrassment which is peculiar to persons in his delicate situation. At length—"I was wantin a bit gig or twa," he said, with some confusion of manner.

"Mair than ane?" said his friend Mr Thomson, in some surprise.

"Ay, twa or three mair!" replied Johnny, smiling with an affectation of being funny.

"Gude preserve us! what are ye gaun to do wi' a' thae gigs?" said Mr Thomson; but, without waiting for a reply, added—"How many, then, Mr Reid?"

Johnny made a mental calculation for a moment, and then said—"I daresay I'll need aught at the very least."

"Aught gigs!" exclaimed Mr Thomson, in the utmost astonishment. "That'll be an awfu turn oot. Is't a funeral or a waddin?"

"Something o' the last, I'm thinkin," replied Johnny.

"Wha's the happy man?" inquired Mr Thomson, who had heard nothing of his friend's approaching marriage.

"Do ye count everybody happy that's gaun to be married?" said Johnny, putting a question instead of answering one.

"Surely, surely," replied Mr Thomson. "That's aye ta'en for granted; an' I hope it's aye true."

"I hope sae too," said Johnny; "for I'm rather closely connected wi' the present case."

"It's no *you* that's gaun to be married, Mr Reid?" exclaimed his friend, in a tone that at once expressed suspicion of and surprise at the fact.

"It's owre true, I doot," said Johnny. "I'm ane o' thae happy men ye speak aboot."

Mr Thomson took his friend by the hand, and wished him joy. The two, thereafter, proceeded to look out the vehicles wanted; and Johnny's taste being consulted as to their colour and general appearance, he gave it, with regard to the former, decidedly in favour of yellow.

The gigs looked out, Johnny next hired or bespoke several saddle-horses, for the use of two or three of the party whom he knew to delight in equestrian exercises, and who, he felt assured, would, in consequence, prefer this mode of travelling. All this arranged, and sundry other matters referring to the same end adjusted—which matters included Johnny's ordering an entire new suit, consisting of a splendid blue coat, white waistcoat, and light-drab smalls, and, more important than all, the marriage day fixed—our happy bridegroom elect awaited, with what patience he could, the consummation of his hopes.

The sun, in the meantime, went his usual course; and day succeeded night and night succeeded day, with their

wonted regularity, until their revolution brought round the happy morning which was to see Johnny Reid and Mrs Monypenny united in the silken bands of wedlock. It was a great event—a great day; and everything, even nature, was propitious; for the weather, which had before been wet, raw, and cloudy, had undergone a sudden and total change. The rain had ceased; a genial warmth was diffused through the atmosphere; the sun shone forth in unclouded splendour; and the little wanton birds

"Sang love on every spray."

It was, in short, as fine a morning as ever rose on the Gorbals of Glasgow—which, by the way, we rather think we forgot to say before, is the scene of our story. So far, then, all was right. It being arranged, according to the usual etiquette in such cases, that the marriage ceremony should be performed at the bride's residence, which was a small flat immediately over the shop, thither it was that the company repaired, on the eventful morning in question. The ceremony was to take place at nine o'clock, breakfast to succeed, and the whole party then to betake themselves to the several conveyances provided for them in the manner already set forth.

Nine o'clock, then, saw the whole company assembled in the bride's well-furnished dining room, with Johnny, conspicuous in the centre, doing the honours of the occasion, and looking as airy and gay in his white waistcoat and light smalls as a youth of nineteen. By and by, the blushing bride was led into the room by two fair brideswomen, the clergyman took his place in the centre of the apartment, the gallant bridegroom took his by the side of his betrothed, the company closed round them, and the august ceremony which unites the destines of so many, both for good and for evil, immediately commenced; and, when it was completed, Johnny Reid and Mrs Monypenny were man and wife. On the conclusion of the ceremony, the company sat down to a splendid breakfast, which was greatly enlivened by the witticisms and sly remarks of two or three waggish guests, who, availing themselves of the privileges of the occasion, kept up a running fire of humorous badinage and cunning inuendo. The company were thus employed—that is, eating, drinking, and laughing—when they were suddenly startled by a tremendous noise in the street—said noises being composed of the screaming of children, and the rattling of a prodigious number of wheel carriages. On hearing these sounds, Johnny ran to the window, glanced through it, then, turning round to his company, blandly announced "that it was the gigs." It was; and a precious string there was of them—some six or eight. They were of all sorts of colours; but a bright flaming yellow, prevailed. Of this attractive hue were the greatest number. When this lot of gigs, whose array was brought up by four saddle-horses, were drawn up in a string in front of the shop of the late Widow Monypenny, and when each separate gig had got its knot of admirers—in the shape of a mob of little, ragged, yelling urchins—we may safely say, that a more stirring, a more animated scene had seldom been seen in the main street of Gorbals, or, indeed, in any other street of that elegant suburb.

Johnny's announcement, "that it was the gigs," having had the effect of at once arousing and diverting the feelings of the company from their present occupation, the process of breakfasting was instantly curtailed, and a general movement made in advance towards the next department of the wedding programme. The table was, in a twinkling, deserted, and a general rush made, on the part of the ladies, for shawls, cloaks, and bonnets—on that of the gentlemen, for sticks, hats, and greatcoats. All this adjusted, Johnny, who had now encased his nether man in a pair of splendid, new top-boots, as better adapted for journeying than the slight pumps in which he was married, left the house, and took his station on the flag-stones in front of the shop, in order to arrange and superintend the occupation of the different vehicles. Thus posted as master of the ceremonies, Johnny paired off his guests as they came out—putting a lady and a gentleman into each gig—and, lastly, saw the four previously-appointed equestrians safely mounted on their several steeds. All this done, and Johnny having cast a sharp, scrutinising, field-officer-like glance alongst the line, to see that all was right, he turned round to a little girl who had been handing in parasols to the ladies in the gigs, and said, in a gentle whisper—

"Tell Mrs Reid to come doon."

In less than a minute after, Mrs Reid made her appearance, in suitable travelling attire. Johnny gallantly gave her his arm, conducted her to an unoccupied gig at the head of the row, tenderly helped her in, followed himself, took whip and reins in hand, stood up, for an instant, and glanced backwards to see that all was in order, seated himself with a thud that sent the body of the gig far down between the wheels, gave a knowing, business-like choo-oo-up, touching his horse gently with the whip at the same time, and started, followed by the other gigs and horses, all in regular and proper line—the whole being, at the same moment, vociferously cheered by an admiring mob.

Thus, leading the van, Johnny conducted his procession down the main street of the Gorbals—then by Carlton Place—(if the reader knows such localities)—then along the Broomielaw Bridge—then up Jamaica Street—then out by Anderston—which last turn put it on the high road to its intended destination—said destination being the beautifully-situated village of Kilpatrick, distant from Glasgow somewhere about eleven miles, and at the principal inn of which it was proposed the party should dine. Hitherto—that is, till the procession had cleared Cranston Hill—all had gone on smoothly. Not a single thing had gone out of joint. The long row of yellow gigs were keeping their due distances, and rolling gently onwards with their merry occupants. The horsemen were prancing gaily by the side of the wheeling vehicles; now by this gig and now by that—now in front and now in rear, as the errant humour of the moment, or the desire of varying their company directed. Happy and merry were they all; but happiest and merriest of the squad was the favoured of fortune, Johnny Reid. Seated beside the object of his affections in a yellow gig, having near him all his soul held dear, and followed by a mob of sympathising friends, in yellow gigs also, Johnny was, indeed, an enviable man, and he felt that he was so; but he began also, about this time, to feel some fears on the subject of the sufficiency of his vehicle—and not without reason; for it seemed to labour terribly under the very formidable weight of himself and fair companion, who was of a most matronly presence. The two, in truth, were squeezed into the gig with a solidity and amount of pressure that seemed every moment to threaten the total dismemberment of the body of the vehicle, while the weight of the jolly pair bore it so low down between the wheels, and, at the same time, gave it such an inclination backwards, that it seemed next to a perfect miracle how the machine got on at all. No wonder, then, that Johnny had his fears on the subject. From what we have said, the reader will see that they were reasonable, and perfectly warranted by the circumstances of the case.

This was a danger, then, which Johnny did apprehend; but there was another which he did *not*. This was, that his horse should play him any such scurvy trick as making a bolt off with both him and the wife. Indeed, this was a danger which he could scarcely have anticipated; for the animal was, to all appearance, as quiet and docile a beast as any elderly, fat, new-married couple could desire. Probably, a horse-jockey, or one well-skilled in the nature of

these animals, might have discovered, from the way in which Johnny's horse pricked up his ears, on the most trifling occasions, and the sly, askance looks which he, from time to time, threw at the most ordinary objects, that he was by no means a beast to be trusted, and that his seeming meekness was all a deception, calculated to take in the unwary. We say probably a horse-jockey, or other person, skilful in these matters, might have discovered this; but Johnny, being neither the one nor the other, did not. He trusted implicitly to the good faith of his steed; and, having no guile himself, never dreamt that his horse had. This was a point, however, in which he was soon to be cruelly undeceived. But the discovery of the animal's treachery did not come upon him suddenly or unawares. It was gradually disclosed. Long blind to the faults of the beast, Johnny at length perceived, and perceived with no small alarm, the pricking of the ears to which we have above alluded. Two or three cases of unprovoked shying or boggling also came under his observation; and the whole was confirmed in its worst meaning, by the animal making several bolts from the straight course, on several different occasions. All this was alarming, and Johnny was alarmed accordingly; but he said nothing, for fear of disturbing the perfect equanimity in which his wife was reposing in utter, but happy ignorance of the danger to which she was exposed.

Although, however, Johnny *said* nothing on the subject of his apprehensions, he *did* something with reference to them. He watched the motions of his horse with greater vigilance; kept a steadier and tighter rein hand; and, altogether, braced himself up as a man who might be momentarily called upon to meet a sudden and imminent danger. Johnny's fears, in short, were now very great, and were by no means lessened by a secret conviction that he was but an indifferent gig driver. He, in fact, knew little or nothing about it; this being but the third time he had ever been in such a machine in his life, and the first on which he had attempted to conduct one.

What he wanted in skill and practice, however, Johnny determined to supply by care, vigilance, and a due exercise of main strength, when occasion should call for it.

Thus prepared for the worst, and still keeping his apprehensions to himself, Johnny drove cautiously on; controlling the animal's progress—which he could not but observe was gradually shewing a tendency towards an increase of velocity—with a firm, but gentle hand. This authority, however, Johnny began to perceive was exercised in vain; for the headstrong animal, notwithstanding all his efforts, still went on improving its speed, while its ears assumed a fierce and permanent cock. Johnny became alarmed—greatly alarmed. Still he said nothing; but his face became of an ominous red; and he pulled at the reins with all his power, throwing himself back in the gig in order to add weight to force.

"What's the matter, John?" said his wife, in some alarm, from now perceiving her husband's trepidation, and the desperate, though silent struggle in which he was engaged.

"The brute!" said Johnny, "the brute's threatenin to tak a camstrary fit, but I houp we'll be able to haud him in."

Johnny might hope this; but, if he did, he hoped in vain, for the speed of the animal was manifestly increasing. He was now, in truth, spinning along at a most alarming rate, and making nothing at all of the counteracting efforts of his driver, or rather restrainer; for the two had now fairly changed wills. But Johnny's steed went not alone in his speed. The other horses of the cavalcade approved of his spirit, and shewed their approbation by accelerating their motions also. They, in fact, started too; and, notwithstanding all the efforts of their respective drivers, kept close at the heels of their spirited leader. That leader was now every moment adding to his velocity. He was going at an appalling rate, and now he was at the top of his speed, dashing wildly and madly along.

Johnny had lost all control, all presence of mind; and, away—away like Mazeppa, went Johnny, his wife, and his yellow gig, flying along the king's highway. Away, away, and away too, were all the other yellow and red gigs of the procession, rattling at his heels, in one long, swift, flashing line; and, behind all, at the top of their speed, and shouting desperately for assistance, came the four horsemen. It was an awful sight to see this long line of gigs, with its tail of horsemen, whirling along the highroad, with the speed of lightning; the ribbons, shawls, &c., of their female occupants, streaming behind like so many signals of distress, their owners screaming wildly, and at the tops of their shrillest voices, and holding with a death-gripe by the sides of their respective gigs, as if they would, by this miserable effort, stay the onward motion of their bumping and maddened vehicles; their no less unhappy, but less noisy companions, leaning desperately back in their several gigs, with faces red with horror, to add weight and power to the deadly pull at the reins, with which they vainly strove to check the onward progress of their fiery Bucephaluses; the horsemen behind, pursuing at full gallop, and shouting they knew not what. It was an awful sight; and these were awful sounds; yet was it not without a touch of the sublime, so closely allied is the terrible and the pleasing. It was sublime to see the whirling gigs, as they glided and bounced along, their wheels now spinning in the air, as they were tossed on high by coming violently in contact with some obstructing stone; now edging over till they were within a hair's breadth of being capsized by the sinking of a wheel into some treacherous rut; again half in half out of the muddy ditch that skirted the roadway, and once more going it smoothly over the level highway. In this, then, there was a combination of the terrible and the pleasing, let the fastidious say what they like.

The necessary attention which we have been hitherto called upon to pay to the proceedings of the general cavalcade of gigs, has prevented us dwelling on individual points or incidents. Time, however, admits of it now, and we avail ourselves of the liberty to sketch, in a compartment by itself, the particular state of matters in the particular gig occupied by Johnny Reid and his wife, during the frightful run which we have described. The picture here, then, was most affecting. Mrs Reid, in a swoon, the consequence of extreme terror, was hanging insensible on her husband's neck; while Johnny, utterly unable to pay her the attentions her case demanded, and his own feelings would have prompted, was still violently, but vainly tugging at the reins. You might have thought him regardless of the condition of his wife; but this was by no means the case. It was no moment for an exchange of endearments. Johnny's soul was engrossed by the arduous duties of holding in, although he could not hold in his fiery charger; but his looks, his haggard looks sufficiently shewed the great and divided distress of his mind—divided between his wife's particular misery and their common peril.

In the meantime, on, on, and on, went the sweeping cavalcade of gigs, in one continuous and swiftly moving line. On and on they went till they had gained the village of Yoker—and it was here that Johnny first gave utterance to the feelings that were distracting him, encouraged thereto by the presence of a population.

"Hoo! haa! haa—a—haa—a! Stop the gig! stop the gig! Assistance here! assistance here! For God's sake, stop the gig! Some o' ye get haud o' the gig!" madly and wildly shouted Johnny, at the top of his voice; but he shouted in vain. No aid could reach him. Two or three adventurous spirits tried it, but they were knocked over one

after the other, like nine pins; and none remained who would expose themselves to the same treatment. On, therefore, and on flew Johnny's gig; and after it, with undiminished velocity, followed the train of gigs with its rear of outriders. In a twinkling was the village traversed by the whole cavalcade, before the eyes of its wondering inhabitants, to whom, so rapid was their motions, the passing string of gigs appeared rather like some baseless vision, some fairy procession, than the wedding party of an honest exciseman on an excursion of pleasure. It was but a sight and gone. It was here—it was there—it was no more. People rubbed their eyes, and wondered if they had seen aright. Some there were, however, who *knew* they had; and these, willing to make up for that want of alacrity in rendering assistance to the distressed wedding party which the suddenness of their appearance, and velocity of their motions, had occasioned, gave chase with the yells and shouts which such moments of excitation are apt to give rise to. They poured out of the village in one tumultuous mass; and, although the flying cavalcade was now far a-head, pursued with an eagerness in which there was much more of good will than reasonable calculation.

But all things, gentle reader, as thou well knowest, must have an end—and so had Johnny's race against time. A mile or two more, and it was all over; and how it was finished we proceed to tell.

Not far from the village of Bowling Bay, the main road is intersected by the Forth and Clyde Canal, which disembogues itself at the village above named. Now, this intersection is rendered passable by a drawbridge, and by that alone, which is, of course, raised when a vessel is traversing this particular point. Well, it so happened, that, at the moment that Johnny and his cavalcade approached the bridge, it was up. This at once arrested the horse's progress in a straight line; but it did not hinder the malicious animal from putting a characteristic finish to his performances.

On finding his onward way thus interrupted, he took a lateral direction along the banks of the canal, came as close to the edge as he could, as if on purpose to accomplish some evil design. It was accomplished. One of the wheels went over, and in the next instant Johnny and his wife were floundering in the water, having been fairly canted in; while the cause of all this mischief stood blowing and panting on the bank, with an expression of countenance which seemed to say, "Let them take *that!*—I have done the trick now." He certainly had; but, fortunately, there was help at hand. A boat was instantly pushed off from the sloop that was in the act of passing the drawbridge; and, by the active exertions of the three or four stout fellows by whom it was manned, Johnny and his buoyant bride—for her clothes having been inflated, she floated like a majestic swan—were, after much tugging and hauling, fished out of the water, and placed safely on *terra firma*, not much the worse, after all, except the ducking, of their gambols in the canal.

"'Od, guidwife," said Johnny, after ascertaining that his better half was in no way seriously injured—the ducking, in truth, having rather done good than harm, inasmuch as it had completely and at once recovered her from her swoon—"'Od, guidwife," he said, shaking himself like a huge water dog, "this has been a queer beginning o' our married life. But, better to begin't in cauld water than in het."

Mrs Reid laughed graciously at her husband's witty remark; and, taking his arm, they hurried—after having given the men who took them out of the water, a gratuity, and seen the fatal gig taken in charge by a bystander, who offered his services in this way—into a public-house hard by, in order to have themselves dried, if not shifted; and to get, as Johnny said, "a toothfu o' brandy to cure the chitterin, as his teeth war gaun like as mony nailers' hammers workin against time."

Leaving Johnny and his bride thus comfortably, though temporarily disposed of, after all their perils and sufferings, we return to the other members of the cavalcade and their several conveyances, *alias* gigs—and here we find a curious scene presenting itself. These too, every one of them, had taken lateral directions on finding their progress interrupted by the drawbridge. But some had gone one way and some another, and were thus scattered about in all directions. Some were stuck in hedges, some were fast in ditches, and others were still scampering through the adjoining fields. The horsemen, again, having a greater command of their steeds than their friends in the gigs, had been able to bring to at once, and without sustaining any damage. But they had not selfishly reposed on their own safety. Every man of them had dismounted, given their horses in charge to by-standers, and might now be seen running in all directions after the recreant vehicles of their friends. All this tangled heap of adventure and mishap, however, was at length happily wound up—more happily, certainly, than could have been expected from the appalling appearance which the general state of matters presented. There was no one hurt—not one in the least injured. The handing out of the ladies, therefore, and the collecting of the dispersed gigs, was a merrier affair than one could have supposed likely under the circumstances. There was in truth much laughing, and a good many merry jests passed at the performance of these needful operations.

On their being completed, the whole party assembled in the public-house, in which the new married pair had already taken shelter. Here, again, the mirth was renewed, and with all the additional energy and spirit which a pretty free circulation of the brandy bottle could impart.

By and by, however, a talk arose about proceeding with the journey; but on this matter coming under discussion, it was found that not one of the whole party would again enter a gig on any account—and with none was the aversion to the proceeding more strong than with Johnny Reid.

Such being the case, then, it was determined, that the party, as they were but a short way from the place of their destination, should accomplish the remaining distance on foot—and this was accordingly done; the gigs following after, in a long train under the conduct of two or three persons, who had been hired for the purpose.

Having thus got our party snugly housed at Kilpatrick, and as no circumstance of the smallest interest marked their subsequent proceedings on this eventful day, we will not detain or annoy the reader with a description of commonplaces; meaning thereby a detail of the sayings and doings of a happy dinner party, in which, indeed, there was much to please the good folks themselves; but wondrously little in which the reader, or any neutral person, would feel much interested, or by which they would be much edified.

Let it be sufficient to say, that the whole party having still the terrors of the morning's experience before their mind's eye, returned per steam to Glasgow; having sent the train of gigs back to the city, under the charge of an hostler, and a suitable compliment of assistants, where they arrived in safety, and without any further adventure—and with their return ends the eventful history of Johnny Reid's Wedding.



THE BEWILDERED STUDENT.

Fifty years ago, the roads in many parts of Scotland were so bad that they could only be travelled on with safety in broad daylight. The dangers which the tourist had to encounter did not arise from the lawless dispositions of the people; for Scotland was then a highly moral and highly hospitable country. But, ere the genius of road-making had visited it, the benighted wanderer had more reason to apprehend destruction from the delusive light of the "moss-traversing spunkie," than from the sudden flash of the robber's pistol. Vast undrained marshes were common in every part of the country. From these marshes many a goodly peat-stack had been delved, and the holes were soon filled up with stagnant water—covered with zoophites and other aquatic plants, and surrounded by tall rushes, which concealed from the eye those oblivious pits, where a whole regiment of soldiers might have found an inglorious grave.

The roads, in many places, passed so close to these unwholesome bogs, that a false step in the dark was often equal to stepping out of this world. Nor was this the only risk that a traveller had to calculate upon, when settling the propriety of making his will before he undertook a journey; for the highways—properly so called, at that period—frequently ascended in the most abrupt manner from the swampy valley to the rocky hillside, where they winded along the edges of precipices, which afforded admirable facilities for despairing lovers to take the *lowp* without being suspected of suicide.

Besides the actual danger which attended travelling in those days, there were many inconveniences, which, though less appalling, were even more perplexing to a forward spirit, than the risk of tumbling from a rock-head, or plunging into a peat-bog. The roads, in many places, branched out in different directions upon lonely moors, where no information could be obtained concerning the places to which they led; and the consequence was, that many a weary wight, after cogitating half an hour upon the propriety of turning to the right hand or the left, dashed into one of the doubtful paths, and proceeded for another hour at his utmost speed, to no better purpose than simply to receive information that he had walked four miles out of his way. Inns, too, were almost unknown, except in the towns, and upon the most frequented roads; and even there, the accommodation was so meagre, that equestrians had often the greatest difficulty in finding lodgings for themselves and horses. Steam-waggons and stage-coaches, as yet, lay packed up in the heads of their inventors; and the traveller, though otherwise in comfortable circumstances, had no other means of conveyance but his own two legs, and an oaken or hazel staff, with which he urged them onward when ascending, and prevented them running away with him when descending the hill-side. Thus equipped, he could find lodgings in the first cottage which he came to; and, if his mind was not too refined for the conversation of simple, social, warm-hearted men, nor his taste too delicate for the "halesome parritch, chief o' Scotia's food," he could generally pass the night with tolerable comfort, and very little expense. In this way, many of the most eminent men of the time became acquainted with the humble homes and virtuous habits of the peasantry of their native land; and the information which they thus acquired, formed a link of connection between the different classes of society, which the prejudices of fashion could never afterwards wholly destroy. But we have a simple story to narrate, which will sufficiently illustrate the kindly hospitality which characterised the poorest of our rural population, and the generous feeling with which the greatest could remember and requite the little services which inclination *induced*, or necessity *forced* them to accept.

Upon the banks of one of the most beautiful little lakes which is to be found in the Lowlands of Scotland, and not far from the ancient and now half-forgotten village of Lindores, stand four humble cottages, which are still the abodes of men; though, to the eyes of a modern traveller, their low walls and moss-covered roofs would present the idea of sheep-cots or cattle-sheds, rather than that of human habitations. The fields around them are now in the highest state of cultivation; and the gentle hills with which they are on all sides surrounded, where inaccessible to the plough, are, for the most part, covered with thriving plantations, which give a sheltered and picturesque appearance to the little world in which they are situated. These simple sheilings seem to have outlasted many of their humble contemporaries, the sites of which are now only indicated by two or three decaying trees, which, in the greenness of youth, must have beautified the little gardens of sober old men, who are long ago in their graves, and shaded the sports of children, who are now, perhaps, tottering with bleached locks, through the crowded streets of some smoky town, forgetful alike of the quiet fields upon which they danced away the innocent morning of existence, and the spreading trees beneath whose branches they had imitated the voice of the cuckoo, and listened to the song of birds, with spirits as light and musical as their own.

About fifty years ago, one of these cottages was occupied by James W—— and his wife, a most respectable and industrious pair, whose humble virtues are still remembered with esteem by the elderly part of the community in the neighbourhood where they lived. James was a weaver, and, like most of his craft at that time, he manufactured his own yarn, and sold his own cloth. But, besides this little business, which he carried on for himself, he was often employed by the country people in what was called customer work. He also farmed a small piece of ground, which afforded him a healthful occupation in the spring months, and supported a cow, whose produce, to use his own language, "keepit a fu' house a' the year round."

James was rather an intelligent man for his station. Besides being deeply versed in all that Biblical knowledge which was then so happily cultivated by the labouring class in Scotland, he had read Josephus and some other old historians, whose writings he quoted with so much promptness and propriety that many of his simple listeners believed him to be almost inspired, and some of them went even so far as to say that his speech wanted only a little polishing to make him a match for the minister. But, though

James really possessed a greater amount of knowledge than most of those with whom he mingled, he never exhibited that arrogant, overbearing manner, which is too often allied to superior abilities. His good-nature was equal to his other acquirements, and he was a special favourite with all who knew him. He could explain an abstruse doctrine to the satisfaction of the old guidmen, and enlarge with great animation on the merits of good housewifery, not forgetting, in the course of discussion, to pay a delicate compliment to the thrifty dames who intrusted him with the manufacturing of their linen. Nor was he less admired by the younger part of the community; for, while the old and sober asserted that James was a *canny* man, and a learned man, the young and frolicsome assured one another that he was a droll man, and a funny man. On the harvest field he was the very "soul of all;" for he never wanted a queer story or a witty jest, to cheer the spirits of his fellow-labourers, when they began to flag under the heat and toil of the day. His wit, however, was of that quiet, inoffensive kind, which delights those who listen, without wounding the feelings of those upon whom it is exercised. He possessed a happy turn, too, for settling the disputes which frequently arose among the young and fiery spirits which composed the little army of reapers with whom he was engaged. When a competition, or *campe*, as it was called, occurred, James' mediation was often necessary, to reconcile the contending parties to the results of the contest; and his talent was seldom exerted in vain. While the pride of the vanquished brought forth charges of unfair play to cover the shame of defeat, and while these charges were repelled by the boasting of the victors, James stepped forward with some humorous remark, or displayed some piece of ludicrous mimicry, which overpowered the spirit of contention, and united both parties in a harmonious roar of laughter. He was not only umpire in their quarrels, and master of the ceremonies at their feasts, but chaplain in ordinary at their common breakfasts and dinners among the stooks. Upon these occasions, it was pleasing to remark the solemnity which prevailed in the usually noisy assembly, when James took off his old dimpled hat, and, with a devotional gravity, which contrasted finely with the cheerful expression of his ordinary countenance, solicited the blessing of God upon the simple repast of which they were about to partake. If, at any time, the sly winks of some mischievous wag succeeded in raising a titter among the younger part of the company, it was suppressed in a moment; for, though James was extremely good-natured, he was always severe in rebuking the conduct of those who shewed the least disrespect to religion.

Having thus given a general account of James' character, we must now proceed to narrate a simple anecdote in his life, which we consider worthy of being known, not only on account of the generosity of feeling which it exhibits, but also on account of the opportunity which it affords for displaying the genuine simplicity of manners which prevailed among the class to which he belonged at the period when it occurred.

One fine afternoon, in the beginning of the winter of 1776, as James was busily employed at his occupation in the shop, Nanny, his wife, entered with a handful of pirns, and a countenance which betokened something of importance. She was evidently in a hurry, and needed her husband's assistance; but hesitated about the propriety of asking it.

"When Jamie's aff the loom," said she to herself, "nather beam-traddles nor bore-staff 'll budge a single bit; an', if he fa's in wi' onybody by the gaet, wha kens when he may come back again?—for the greatest faut that oor Jamie has, is juist that he likes a crack owre weel."

Notiwthstanding of these prudential considerations, Nanny did broach the subject in a most becoming and delicate manner, by asking her husband's advice in her present perplexity.

"What are we to do noo, Jamie?" said she, in a rather depressed tone. "There's no a pickle meal i' the barrel; an' I hae the cow's supper to get in, an' the butter to mak, an' the bed to mak, an' the milk to 'earn, forby mony a ither thing that *maun* be done—sae, ye see, I hae nae time to gang for meal the nicht."

"Hout, lassie!" said James, with a smile; "I'll tell ye what we'll do. I'll juist get a pock, an' set up by to Sandy Laing's for a peck or twa to keep oor teeth gaun till oor ain melder come frae the mill."

"Weel, aweel, Jamie," said the guidwife, glad to find such a ready remedy for all her difficulties. "If ye'll bring the meal, I'll mak the parritch, lad; but it wad hae been a braw thing if we had haen a bit cratur o' oor ain to gang an errant like this, an' we micht hae been makin something at oor wark i' the time."

"It's very true, lassie," said James; "but, if we hae nae bairn to carry meal, we hae nane to eat it—let's aye be content, woman."

James was soon provided with a clean linen bag, which he deposited in his pocket; and, crossing his arms upon his back, he set off to the neighbouring village of Lindores, for the necessary supply of meal. As he was proceeding along the ridge of a natural embankment, which forms the north-eastern boundary of the Loch, he saw a well-dressed young man advancing towards him. The stranger seemed to be in a hurry—at least one might have supposed so from the rapidity of his motion; but he occasionally stopped and looked down upon the frozen lake, which expanded to the sky like a mighty mirror for the passing clouds to behold their own shadows in. After gazing for a few minutes, as if he had forgotten the length of his journey in contemplating the beauty of the prospect which extended beneath him, he would start off at a quicker pace, as if anxious to redeem the time which he had lost in gratifying an idle curiosity. When he drew near, James could easily discover, from his superior dress, slender make, and pale, meditative countenance, that he did not belong to that class "who drudge through wet and dry with never-ceasing toil;" and, notwithstanding of his itch for conversation, he would have passed the stranger without making any remark upon the state of the weather, the beauty of the scenery, or the antiquities of the parish. But the young man, who seemed to be as inquisitive as James was communicative, addressed him in a tone of frank cordiality, which at once removed every feeling of reserve.

After a few questions had been asked and answered, James, recollecting his errand, pulled out the bag which he had received from his wife, and, exhibiting it to his new-found acquaintance, remarked—

"I'm juist gaun doon by to Sandy Laing's here, to get twa pecks o' meal; an' gin ye'll stap at leisure for a wee, I'll gae doon the hill wi' ye, an' point oot a' the curiosities o' the place by the gaet."

The stranger agreed to this proposal, and James marched off with most ungentlemanly strides to the merchant's, from which he returned in an incredibly short time, with his meal on his back, his hat in his hand, and his body bent forward several degrees beyond its usual perpendicular position.

"Hech, sir!" said James, as he again came up with the stranger, "I'm clean oot o' breath wi' my hurry; but an auld body's blast's sune blawn, an' that's a stiff brae to climb wi' a burden; but mine's no a heavy ane."

"Permit me to carry it a bit till you recover yourself," said the stranger, taking hold of the bag.

"Na, na, sir," said James, laughing. "I'm muckle

obliged—greatly obliged, sir; but ye dinna ken the penalty o' carrying a pock o' meal yet. Only look at my back, an' think hoo sic a melvyin wad suit on your fine black coat. It wad mak ye look like a miller a'thegither; an' the ladies, whan they saw ye niest, wadna ken that it was juist yersel again. But I'll gather wund in a wee; an', i' the meantime, as I promised to gie ye an account o' the curiosities o' the place, I'll juist begin wi' the nearest first; an', I assure ye, if onything short o' real richteousness can hallow the dust o' the earth, we noo stand on hallowed ground. This very spot where we noo breathe, bears the name o' M'Duff's Hill; an' thae auld stumps o' wa's, that ye see lookin oot among the grass there, are the remains o' what was ance a castle or a palace belangin to the Thanes o' Fife. It wad be a very *unpregnable* place afore the invention o' gunpowther; for ye'll observe that it has Lindores Loch on the south, the Dog Loch on the wast, the Boistart Loch on the north, an' the Childert Loch on the east; an' there's nae doot but they wad hae ditches atween, to prevent their enemies frae gettin in upon them by surprise. I could tell ye some fine stories about the sieges an' battles that hae happened here; but, as it wad tak owre muckle o' yer time, I sall juist mention hoo the lochs cam to get their names. About Lindores Loch I need say naething. A' body kens that it's juist ca'ed after the little towny there, that stands on the north side o't. But the Dog Loch's rather a darker subject. It's supposed to hae derived its name frae the purpose it was devoted to. In auld times, ilka great chief had twa or three packs o' hounds, for hunting boars, an' deers, an' men wi'; an' it's believed that the dogs frae the castle were aye driven to that loch to drink when the chase was done; an' the auld anes, that were owre sair burstin to rin again, were thrown into the middle o't, wi' stanes about their necks to droon. Sae, ye see, frae this circumstance it got the name o' the Dog Loch. The Boistart Loch, again, as ye'll observe, lies atween twa hills; an' whan the wind blaws frae the east or the wast, it gathers into great gusts i' the glen, an' maks the water jaw, an' jawp, an' foam like a caldron; an' for this reason, it has been ca'ed the Boistart or Boisterous Loch. But there's a better story than this connected wi' the name o' the Childert Loch; an' I aye like to tell it, on account o' the generosity that it displays, an' the honour that it reflects upon oor countrywomen, wha, even in the maist savage times, werena a'thegither without some gliffins o' natural affection. It was the custom, it seems, in thae rude ages, for the leddies to engage in oot-door sports as weel as the men; an' a very common amusement hereabout, wi' mothers an' nurses o' a' descriptions, was the drawing o' their bairns, in a sort o' boxes or cradles, upon the smooth ice o' the loch. This diverted the women folk, an' exercised the little anes, wha were thus prepared for the hardships o' the wild life that they afterwards led. Aweel, ae fine winter afternoon, as ane o' the bairns' maids frae the castle was pu'ing a young Macduff, in a braw, silver-mounted cradle, upon the loch, an' his mother lookin at them frae the hill here—maybe frae the very place where we noo stand—the ice brak, an' down gaed the cradle, bairn an' a', to the bottom o' the loch. The puir lassie, wha stood upon a stronger part o' the ice, an' still had the broken leadin-strings in her hand, heard the screams o' the distracted mother, an' saw the muddy water risin owre the head o' the helpless wean; an', casting a confused look around, to see if ony assistance was at hand, she plunged into the same hole; an', in tryin to save the bairn, lost hersel. The watchman, on the castle-tower, heard the screams o' the leddy, an' saw the melancholy accident; an' ae tout o' his horn sent a hunder hardy callants to the place—but they were owre late. The bairn an' his nurse were pu'ed oot o' the loch clasped in ane anither's arms; but the life had gaen oot o' them baith. It's said, however, that the body o' the bit lassie wha had perished in trying to save that young sprout o' nobility, received a' the honour that the gratitude o' its high-minded parents could confer. The last act o' her life was noble, an' she was buried in the same grave wi' the son o' Macduff. But, noo that I've recovered my breath, we'll be joggin awa, if ye like; for ye'll be clean wearied oot wi' waitin upon an auld man's havers."

"I assure you I am not," said the stranger. "I have been much delighted with your recital; and I shall never think that time lost which is spent listening to such interesting anecdotes. But, pray, what is the name of that old, grey-roofed house, upon the bank, at the western extremity of the loch?"

"Ou, that's just oor auld kirk," said James; "an' a very venerable biggin it is, too. It was ance a Roman Catholic chapel; but the altar an' the images hae been a' demolished; an' the only vestige o' superstition that remains noo, is the cross upon the riggin, an' the juggs, an' a stane basin for the holy water, in the porch. But that's a fine, solemn situation, ye'll allow, for a kirk; an' that's a bonny burying-ground around it, too. It's just a pleasure to puir bodies like me to think that they hae a claim to sic a quiet inheritance when a' the toils an' troubles o' life are past."

"'Tis indeed a sweetly-retired spot," said the stranger; "and it wants only that 'cheerless, unsocial plant,' the sepulchral yew, to make it accord exactly to the description given by Gray in these beautiful lines of the Elegy:—

> "'Beneath these rugged elms—that yew-tree's shade,
> Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,
> Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
> The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.'"

"The description agrees unco weel, sir," said James; "for mony a sober Christian an' mony a roy't callant lie thegither below yon grassy divot, without bein sensible o' the company they keep. But, noo that we're speaking o' kirks, gin ye'll just turn a wee bit to the richt wi' me, I'll let ye see a kirk construckit by the hands o' the *Creawtor* himsel; an', I'm sure, He has been mony a time as devootly worshipped there as ever he was in temples built by human hands."

The distance was but a few steps out of the way; and, as the stranger was enthusiastic in his desire to see every curiosity, he readily agreed to accompany James to the place. They, accordingly, turned into a narrow footpath, which diverged to the right, and winded among the gorse in a more southerly direction. The lake, which had been for some time concealed by a shoulder of the hill, again appeared; and the hill itself divided into two ridges—forming a capacious amphitheatre, covered by smooth grass, and surrounded on all sides by tall broom and impenetrable furze. At the head or northern end of this dingle, the ground rises into a mound of considerable height and regularity of form; and, from this mound, the prospect, in all directions, is unobstructed and extensive.

"There," said James, "is the kirk o' the Covenanters; an' mony a guid sermon has been preached there, in defiance o' the winter's cauld, an' the summer's heat, an' the persecution o' cruel men, that was waur to bide than them baith. In that howe stood the minister, upon a muckle stane that has been lang syne removed; an' the congregation sat upon the brae around him. The sentry stood upon this knowe here, at yer richt hand; an' it still bears the name o' the Watchman's Tower. His business, as ye'll maybe ken, was to watch for the appearance o' an enemy, an' gie warnin to the preacher an' his hearers to provide for their safety by standin to their arms or takin to their heels. Mony a time I picture to mysel the confusion that wad tak place amang the women folk when a party o' wild dragoons were seen scamperin in this direction. I think I hear the watchman fire his gun, as he rins to the congregation; I think I see the minister fauldin up the word o' God an'

descendin to his audience wi' the composed dignity o' ane that has settled his account wi' time, an' is prepared to dee for the doctrines he has advanced; then there is the animatin address that he delivers to his little flock, as they gather around him wi' their swords in the richt hand, an' their Bibles in the left; the tears o' their greetin wives, an' dochters, an' sisters, an' sweethearts, fa'in thick as a simmer shower, while they stand tremblin an' sabbin, an' pleadin wi' their freens to flee frae the dangers o' the comin storm; I think I see them wringin their hands and rivin their hair wi' agony, when their entreaties are answered, by the deliberate determination o' the auld an' the fiery resolution o' the young, wi' the fearfu assurance that they will conquer or dee; I think I see that little company o' matrons an' maidens retirin slowly frae the scene o' confusion; while aye, noo an' then, some kind-hearted youth, wha convoys an' comforts them, fa's oot frae the band, an' rins back to the ranks; then they begin singin a hymn o' praise to the God o' battles, wha is able to withstand the powerfu an' protect the oppressed; and immediately—when the crack o' the guns an' the clang o' the swords has convinced them that the deadly wark is indeed begun—they are kneelin down on the grass, wi' their een turned up to heaven, an' sabbin oot wordless prayers for the success an' the safety o' their freens; there is that little band o' heroes, noo broken an' driven back by superior numbers, noo rallyin around their leader, an' returnin to the charge wi' a shout o' triumph that maks a' the hills ring; they are noo once more repulsed an' nearly borne down by the heavy onset o' their mair skilfu enemies—an', just as my heart begins to tremble for their sakes, I hear the cheers o' a fresh reinforcement o' countrymen, an' see their swords brandishin owre the brae, as they rush down to the assistance o' their freens, wha welcome them to the ranks wi' the inspirin war-cry o' the party, 'God an' oor country!' The bluidy persecutors are at last broken an' dispersed afore the irresistible charge o' the united *pawtriots;* and, while they are scamperin frae the field wi' mony a toom saddle in their train, the victors are busy devoutly offerin up thanks to heaven for the battle they hae won.

"But this is no a', sir; I think I see the women-fouk returnin to the scene o' strife to lament owre the dead, and to administer consolation to the deein; there is a puir widow supportin the lifeless head o' her husband—kissin his bluidy lips i' the agonies o' her grief, an' strivin to close the gapin wounds that gie nae mair pain to the body that bears them; a beautifu an' an affectionate dochter, kneelin by the side o' her expirin parent—twinin her arms around his neck, an' droonin wi' her bitter lamentations the deep groans o' the deein man; a band o' sisters are noo endeavourin to bear awa the dead body o' a fair-haired striplin, wha had been the pride o' their family an' the joy o' their hearts; and there is ane there wha, though nae relation to the youth, feels his fate mair deeply than the nearest o' his kin; upon her pale face there is a fearfu struggle between modesty an' grief;—the last overcomes, an', forgetfu o' the presence o' ony but the dead, she clasps him in her arms, while her breast heaves an' sabs like ane wha is suffocatin wi' some unutterable feelin! Then there are her neebors, wha never kenned onything o' her affections till death had divulged them, remarkin, in the language o' Scripture, 'Behold how she loved him!' But, 'deed, sir, I maun hae dune; for ye'll be like to think that I've gane clean daft a'thegither wi' sae muckle nonsense; an' I maun confess, that when I get on thae auld stories, I haena guid gettin aff them again."

"I just think," said the stranger, "that, if you *had* lived in the days of the Covenant, you would have been a most inveterate Conventicler; and, to confess a truth, had I lived at the same period, I would most likely have been found in the same ranks; for, ere I arrived at that age when men are ashamed to cry, I often wept most heartily over the sufferings of the poor Hillmen. But night approaches; and, as I suppose I have a long way to go before I can get a bed, I would thank you to direct me the nearest road to Cupar?"

"To Cupar, sir?" said James, in surprise. "Ye dinna surely intend to gang to Cupar this nicht?"

"No," said the stranger. "I only intend to go as far as the first public house where I can find accommodation for the night; but that will not be just at hand, I believe."

"Atweel no, sir," said James; "for, there's no a public house, on the road to Cupar, nearer than John Denmill's—an' that's at Easter Fernie a' the gait. But John's a queer chap, an' he *will* divert ye if ye ance get there."

"Well," said the stranger, "a good fire, a good supper, and a jolly landlord, make the best entertainment for a traveller, on a winter evening."

Our two friends proceeded for a short distance farther, together; and, before they parted, James not only gave the young man the best instructions he could with respect to the road, but also invited him to come to his cottage, which was just at hand, and partake of some bread and cheese, assuring him, at the same time, "that he wad get nae meat on the hill, and that his guidwife wad be as proud as a duchess to hae sic a guest under her roof."

The stranger thanked James most heartily for his kindness, but civilly declined the offered entertainment. They parted with mutual esteem. James went home with his meal, and the stranger went on his way.

By this time the sun had sunk to the verge of the horizon, and the sky, which had been previously clear, began to overcast. A fresh gale too sprung up from the east, and blew full in the stranger's face. Night was approaching fast; and he had five miles to travel upon an intricate hilly road, before he could reach any place of shelter. The moon, upon which he had depended for light, now threatened to be of little service; for, though she occasionally burst upon his eye through the ragged edges of the driving clouds, it was but a momentary flash, which deepened instead of dissipating the surrounding darkness. He buttoned his coat, drew his hat closer down upon his head, and made all the speed he could against the tempest, which now blew so violently that it sometimes brought him to a dead stand; and, notwithstanding of his perilous circumstances, he could not refrain from laughing at himself, as he struggled with the viewless element which opposed his progress, and whistled defiance to his vengeance.

He at length came to a place where the road divided, and, turning his back to the storm, he stood for a few minutes to recollect the instructions which he had received from his late guide. A number of little lights now caught his eye twinkling from the cottage windows in the vale below; and, as he again proceeded on his way, he could not help looking back, and indulging a momentary feeling of envy over the condition of those who were sitting warm and dry by their own fire-sides while he was toiling amid the tempest. The poorest inhabitants of these cottages, thought he, are, for the present, blessed when compared with me. They possess all the comforts of home, and perhaps do not appreciate their worth, while I am destitute of all but a deep knowledge of the value of what I do not possess.

As he advanced, the lights began to disappear. He seemed to have passed beyond the limits of the inhabited country, and nothing was to be seen but an uncertain road before him, and darkness on every side. The storm grew wilder, and the doubtful path, which he had previously pursued, terminated in a number of little tracks, which diverged in all directions among the furze, as if they had been formed by a flock of sheep scattered over the hill in search of their pasture. He tried to retrace his steps, in the supposition that he had taken the wrong road; but a

blinding shower of snow came driving with the wind, and concealed every object which might have guided him in his return. He became completely bewildered, and every moment increased his confusion. The snow began to drift; and all the stories that he had ever heard of benighted travellers lost among the hills, rushed into his mind with painful distinctness. He began to run in the direction, as he supposed, of the little hamlets which he had passed in the afternoon; but his feet got entangled among the gorse and broom which covered the hill, and he fell several times at full length among the snow. He stood still and listened, with the faint expectation that he might hear some sound which would lead him to the abodes of men. Something tinkled at a distance, between the gusts of the storm, like the ringing of a bell. He immediately shaped his course by the sound, and was glad to hear that it grew louder as he advanced. Though he could not conjecture the purpose of a bell in that deserted region, yet such it certainly was; and, as no bell will ring without motion, he trusted to find some one who would be able to direct him to a place of shelter. But, after he had walked for a considerable time, at his utmost speed, he found himself very little nearer the object of his pursuit, which seemed to retire as fast as he advanced. He again began to run, and soon had the satisfaction to find himself within a very few yards of the sound; but still, he could not perceive the object from which it proceeded. The mysterious bell-ringer seemed to increase his speed, as if he had discovered a pursuer, and determined to elude his grasp.

The stranger was out of breath; he paused to listen. The bell still rung, and still retired, though at a less rapid rate. He had never believed in ghosts nor fairies; but this mysterious phenomenon seemed to confirm his nurse's tales, and make "chimeras true." He was not one, however, who would shrink from phantoms without evidence of their existence.

"Honest, honest, Iago!" said he, quoting Shakspeare,

"'If that thou be'st a devil, I cannot kill thee.'

"But, devil or ghost, I will hunt thee to thy den, and if I can overtake thee, I will tread thee under my feet."

So saying, he renewed the chase, and, in a few minutes, the bell was again gingling at a fearful rate, almost among his feet. He called out to the flying mystery to stop and speak with him. No answer was made; but his words seemed to produce some effect; for, in a moment more, the bell was off in another direction, tinkling and gingling as loudly as ever.

"You shall not escape me thus," said the stranger, who had quite forgotten his own bewildered condition, in his earnestness to discover the cause of this unaccountable noise.

He again turned and followed the bell with his utmost speed; and, after a long pursuit, and many doublings and windings among the broom, he at length tumbled over some soft body, which rolled among his feet. He grasped it in his arms and listened. The bell had ceased to gingle, and nothing was to be heard but the howling of the wind, and the rustling of the drift.

"I have you now, my boy," said the stranger; "and I will bring you to a severe reckoning for all this sport."

"Bae!" cried the terrified bell-ringer, struggling to escape from the rude grasp which held him.

"Bae!" said the stranger, imitating the voice of the animal. "What a silly pursuit I have been engaged in! But I am glad to find that I am not alone on these wild hills in this wild night."

The young man's knowledge of rural economy, convinced him that he had chased from its companions a poor sheep, who had been entrusted with a bell about its neck, as was the custom in many parts of the country, to enable the shepherd to discover his flock in the morning. The adventures of the renowned Don Quixote occurred to his mind, and he could not help laughing at himself, even in the midst of his misery.

Both the sheep and the man were completely exhausted, and they lay still together for some time among the snow; but the piercing blast and the gathering drift soon convinced the latter that he must either renew his exertions, or perish, with his fleecy companion, beneath the accumulating heap. He accordingly started up, and proceeded—he knew not where. His imagination became haunted with the horrors of his condition, and the idea

> "Of covered pits unfathomably deep,
> A dire descent, beyond the reach of frost;
> Of faithless bogs; of precipices huge,
> Smoothed up with snow"—

so paralyzed his powers that he could scarcely move. But again

> "The thoughts of home
> Rushed on his nerves, and called their vigour forth."

He now found himself descending the hillside; but whether it was the same side which he had ascended, or some other, he could not conjecture. By this time the snow had accumulated to a considerable depth in the hollows; and he frequently plunged into it up to the middle before he was aware. He pulled out his watch to try if he could ascertain the hour; but he could not. He tried his voice, in the hope that some one might hear him, and come to his assistance; but his feeble cry died away unanswered upon the blast. His situation was a desperate one, and he resolved to make one desperate effort more for existence. He turned his back to the storm, determined to run before it as far as he was able; and, should he perish, if possible to perish upon his feet. He had not proceeded far, however, when he tumbled over a steep bank, and rolled from hillock to hillock, till he reached the bottom of the den in a state of insensibility. When he again recovered, he found himself beneath the storm, stretched among the undrifted snow, which was lying about a foot deep around him, while close by his side a brawling stream was dashing over the large stones, which, like him, had rolled down the hill and rested in the bottom of the glen. "Here," thought the stranger, "I have at last found a place where I may die in peace; and it is perhaps, better to give up the struggle, than again to rush into the tempest only to perish beneath its pitiless pelting."

What were his religious feelings, in the prospect of death, we know not; but his home and his friends, the gref which his early fate would occasion, and the melancholy satisfaction which they would derive from bestowing the last rites upon his lifeless remains, were present to his imagination. And, lest they should be deprived of the performance of these sadly pleasing duties, by the ignorance of those who found him, he pulled out his pocketbook, and endeavoured to write his own name, with the name of his father's farm, and the name of the parish in which it was situated.

While thus engaged, in that

> "Hopeless certainty of mind
> Which makes us feel at length resigned
> To *that* which our foreboding years
> Presents the worst and last of fears,"

the deep sonorous sound of a well-blown horn fell upon his ears, and roused him to fresh exertions. He had crossed the burn, and clambered to the top of the bank before the blast had ceased; and, as he endeavoured to fix the direction of the sound, the horn was again winded. It seemed not to be very distant. Hope invigorated his weary limbs, and he dashed through the opposing wreaths as stoutly as if his toils had been only newly begun. Another blast was blown, and he continued to run upon the sound till it ceased, and it was not again repeated.

He recollected that it was common for the farmers, in

many parts of Scotland, to blow a horn at eight o'clock, on the winter evenings, for the purpose of warning their servants to attend to the suppering of the horses; and he hoped that, if he could keep to the proper direction, this might lead him to some hospitable farm-house, where he would soon forget the horrors of the storm before a comfortable fire. He now proceeded more leisurely, striving not to deviate from the course which the horn had induced him to take; and keeping a sharp look-out on all sides, and an intense attention to every sound, in the expectation that some cottage light might twinkle upon his eye, or some human voice reach his ear, in the intervals of the deafening blast. But still he could discover no sight nor sound of man; and the shifting tempest, which attacked him from every direction, soon confounded all his ideas of line and distance. In some places, too, the snow had accumulated in such immense masses that he could not pass through them; and the circuits which he was obliged to make, tended farther to confuse his mind. His spirits again began to sink, and his limbs to falter; and that sluggish indifference which follows the extinction of hope, again took possession of his senses. But, while he was dragging himself onward with slow and feeble steps, a new and extraordinary noise broke upon his ear. He stood still and listened; but he could not conjecture the cause of it. It seemed to mingle with, and yet it was different from the ravings of the storm. It proceeded from one quarter, and remained steadily in one place. There was a mingling of sounds, like the dashing of waves, the rushing of winds, and the gingling of a thousand little bells, accompanied occasionally by a harsh guttural cry, like that which is emitted by a band of wild geese when disturbed in their "watery haunt."

Though this mysterious noise was more appalling than attractive, and though it promised neither rest nor shelter to the stranger, yet it operated upon his curiosity, and induced him to continue his exertions. The terrific sounds grew louder and louder as he advanced. The clouds of snow which were every moment dashed into his face, prevented him from seeing more than a few yards before him; and an involuntary shudder passed over his frame, as he thought that he might even now be toppling upon the brink of some dreadful gulf, and that another step might precipitate him into destruction. Something terrible was certainly at hand; but what was the nature of the danger, was beyond his powers of conception.

The unaccountable noise, which was now thundering beneath him, resembled most the dashing of a cataract, or the roaring of the ocean, when its far-accumulated waves are broken into foaming madness among hidden rocks. He stood still and gazed intently in the direction of the sound. The storm abated a little in its violence; and he thought he could perceive a black expanse at a little distance, stretching out before him. He advanced a few steps nearer it. It was tossing in fearful commotion, and here and there streaked with lines, and dotted with patches of white. It was evidently water; but, whether lake, river, or ocean, was all a mystery.

"Can it be possible," thought he, "that the storm has insensibly driven me in the right direction? Do I now stand among the rocks that look down upon the breaker-beaten bay of St Andrew's? Or have I returned again to the banks of the Tay? Or can this be the little loch which I passed in the afternoon, and which then lay stretched out in frozen tranquillity beneath me?"

His heart grew sick, and his brain dizzy with conjecture. He turned away from the stunning scene with a shiver of despair. A strange sense of torpidity and madness passed along his nerves—it was the confused energy of an active soul, struggling with the numbedness of exhausted nature. The snow seemed to swim around him—his eyes became heavy, and, when he closed them, numberless phantoms seemed to pass before him, like figures in a dream. In this state of drowsy insensibility, he lost, for a time, all recollection of his sufferings—his blood began to stagnate in his veins, and the icy coldness of death was stealing over his extremities, when a covey of wild ducks swept past, and their short, sharp cries startled him again into a consciousness of his condition. When he opened his eyes, a faint light seemed to be glimmering from a hill-side about a hundred yards above him. It was now seen, and now lost, as the clouds of drift passed between him and the place from which it issued. But still it was there; and its dim, shadowy lustre was to him like life to the dead. Hope again returned to his heart, and animation to his limbs; and in a few minutes he had reached the window of a little cottage, which was so completely drifted up with snow on all sides, save that on which he stood, that any one might have passed in broad daylight without supposing it to be a human habitation.

The stranger looked in at the window. The fire, which was composed of peats, had been covered up with ashes to prevent them from wasting through the night; but, by this time, the small dust had passed through the grate, and there only remained a little heap of live embers, which cast a sombre glow around the interior of the cottage. The family were in bed. The stranger rapped gently on the window, and then listened for an answer; but nothing stirred. He rapped a little louder, and again listened.

"What's that, Jamie?" said a female voice, within.

"Hoch, hoch, hey!" said another, yawning and stretching out his arms from the same box or bed, as if to relieve them from the uneasiness of lying long in one position. It was evident that the voice of the first speaker had awakened the second, without communicating to his mind the purport of the question, which was again repeated.

"What was that, Jamie?"

"What was *what*, lassie?" said the wondering husband. "I see naething by ordinar."

"Losh, man," returned the guidwife, "did ye no hear yon awfu rattle at the windock? My flesh's a' creepin, for I fear something no canny's aboot the back o' the hoose. It was just like the noise that was heard at Willy Patty's windock, last year, afore his mither dee'd."

"Hout, haivers, lassie; ye've just been dreamin," said the guidman, who was anxious to quiet his partner's fears, though he was not altogether free from some tremors himself.

The stranger gave another rap.

"Hear ye that, then, Jamie?" said the guidwife. "It's no sic a dream, I trow; for that's something awfu."

"Deed is't," said James, who was now convinced that the "rattle" was not quite so terrible as it had been represented; "it's an awfu thing for ony puir body to be oot in sic a nicht as this; but, let's be thankfu, Nanny, that we hae a roof to hap oorsels frae the storm, an' a door to let a hooseless body in at."

James flung himself around, and disentangled his feet from the bedclothes, with the intention of going immediately to admit the stranger; but, ere he got away from the bedside, his "better half" laid hold on his shirt tail, and cried out, in great perturbation—

"Stop, Jamie—stop, I beseech ye; an' consider weel what ye're aboot; for ye ken that, forby the danger o' robbers and rascals, the evil spirits just delight to range aboot in sic a nicht as this, like roarin lions, seekin wham they may devour; an' wha kens what may come owre ye, if ye pit yersel i' their merciment."

"Hout! haivers, woman!" said James; "let go my sark tail, I tell ye; for I'll speak at the windock, an' spier if he wants shelter, though it war Auld Satan himsel."

Nanny relaxed her grasp; but she seemed determined that the guidman should encounter no danger which she

did not take a share of; and she too sprung to the floor, and followed him to the window.

"Wha's there?" cried James, in a voice that shewed he was neither to be *cowed* by fiends, fairies, ghosts, nor men.

"A bewildered stranger," was the reply.

"Weel," said James, "a great stranger may be a great villain; but, for a' that, if I understand my Bible richtly, the words, 'I was a stranger an' ye took me in,' will never be addressed to ane wha has the hard heart to refuse a hameless wanderer the shelter o' his roof in sic a nicht as this. Sae juist gang ye aboot to the tither side o' the hoose, an' come alang the fore wa' a' the gaet, till ye find the door, an' I'll let ye in."

"Thank you!" said the stranger.

Nanny, who now discovered that the object of all her fears was neither ghost nor goblin, but a conversable and civil creature of her own species, thought that her husband might be safely trusted in his presence without her support; and she accordingly returned again to her bed.

James lighted the lamp, and went to admit the stranger; but, when he opened the door, he opened no passage for his entrance. A solid wall of snow still separated the guidman and his intended guest.

"Preserve's a'!" cried the former, "that's been an awfu' nicht, indeed. The door's driftit up to the lintel; an' there's no a hole i' the hale hicht o't, that a mouse could creep oot or in through. Are ye aye there yet, freend?" (Addressing the stranger, who answered in the affirmative.) "Aweel aweel," he continued, "ye maun juist content yersel awhile or I get a spade an' try an' mak some ootgaet in't."

James got a spade, and commenced to delve the snow into the passage, between the *hallant* and the outer-door; but he had no sooner broken down a part of the barrier, than the insidious drift entered the aperture, and, getting under his shirt, which was the only garment he had on, it whirled about his bare legs. He persisted for a while, but his powers of perseverance ultimately forsook him. He flung down the spade, and, as every gust of wind brought a fresh volley of snow whistling about his ankles, he leaped as high as the henroost, which formed the ceiling of the lobby, would permit.

"Preserve's a', that's dreadfu'!" he at length cried out, making a most magnificent jump at the same time. "Flesh an' bluid canna endure that—it wad gar a horse swither. Ye'll juist hae to thole awee till I get my breeks on, lad."

James bounded into the house, and commenced immediately to get his shivering limbs conducted into the proper openings of a pair of canvass trousers. But this was no easy task. He had got one foot in, and the other within a few inches of the entrance, when his great toe unluckily got entangled in one of the pockets of the garment; and, as he was striving to preserve his equilibrium, by hopping through the house backwards upon one leg, the stranger, who had forced himself through the aperture which he had made in the doorway, entered like a moving mass of snow. James at length succeeded, by the support of the bed, which happily resisted his retrograde movement, in getting on his clothes; and then all his attention was directed to the comfort of his guest.

"Dear me, man," said he, taking hold of the stranger's arm with the one hand, and a broom with the other, "ye'll need hauf-an-hoor's soopin afore we get a sicht o' ye. I'm sure ye're unco far frae comfortable below that wread o' snaw."

As the stranger was standing before the fire, while James was endeavouring to clear away the snow from his neck and shoulder, the sudden change of temperature which he had experienced expanding the fluids faster than the vessels which contained them, produced, in his extremities, that agonizing sensation which is more forcibly expressed by the Scottish word *dinnling*, than by any other word with which we are acquainted. Sickness and pain overpowered his exhausted nerves. His eyes turned wildly up to the roof of the cottage. He gave one suffocating gasp for breath, and sank senseless upon the floor. James seized him in his arms, and called out to his wife—

"O Nanny, Nanny, woman! get up and help's here! The puir callant's fa'en into a drow, an' I'm feared he's gaun to dee upon oor hands a'thegither. Get up, woman, an' let's try if onything can be dune to bring him aboot again."

Nanny sprang up at the call of her husband; and, seizing the stranger by the hand, cried out—

"Preserve's a', Jamie! he's perfectly perishin; his hand is as cauld an' stiff as the poker. I maun get on the kettle, an' heat some water to thaw the snaw aff him."

"Na, na," cried James, "that wad mak him waur, woman. Rin ye to the door an' get a gowpen o' snaw, an' rub his hands wi' *it* an' a rough clout time aboot, an sprinkle some cauld water in his face, an' he'll maybe sune come till himself again."

"Hoot, Jamie," said the guidwife, in a tone of gentle remonstrance, "the lad's gotten owre muckle snaw an' cauld water already; that's juist what's the matter wi' him. I maun hae up the fire an' get something warm till 'im."

"Ye're haverin, Nanny," said James, who was too much agitated to be respectful. "Gang ye an' get the snaw, I tell ye; for ye understand naething o' the matter."

"Aweel, aweel, then," said Nanny, "ye hae mair skill o' doctory than me, Jamie; but it's a very unnatural-like cure, to rub cauld snaw on a man perishin wi' the cauld."

Nanny got the snow, and commenced the operation with great activity, while James reached his hand to a pitcher which was standing near, and sprinkled a few drops of water in the stranger's face. He soon began to shew some symptoms of returning animation, and James earnestly inquired—

"Hoo are ye yet? Are ye better noo?"

After a considerable pause, the stranger replied, as if the question had only then reached him.

"I'm better now, I thank you!"

"God be praised that it's sae!" said James. "Gie him a drink, Nanny, woman, an' he'll be a' richt in a wee again."

Nanny brought some water; and, while she was endeavouring to pour it into the stranger's mouth, James got a full view of his face, and cried out—

"He's the very young gentleman that I cam doon the hill wi' this afternoon. Dear me, what a nicht he's had, wandering among the drift since yon time!"

"He's a bonny laddy, at ony rate," said Nanny, looking close into his face. "Ye'll no grudge to let him get some heat noo, Jamie. Help me aff wi' his coat an' his shoon; an' we'll juist cowp him inower in oor ain warm bed, here."

"That's weel thocht on," said James. "I canna say but ye hae sometimes a gliffin o' sense aboot ye, Nanny."

The stranger soon recovered so far as to be able to put off his own clothes; and, though he remonstrated strongly against taking possession of the honest couple's bed, they would not be resisted in their kindness; and he was obliged to comply. Nanny now took the management of the patient wholly into her own hands; and, as she had all her life considered heat the only remedy for a man perishing with cold, she began to make preparations for applying her own cure. She stirred the fire, supplied it with fresh fuel, laid a brick across it on each side, and placed a pan-

ful of water between them. She then took James's leather apron, and folded it so as to form a substitute for a fan; and with it she blew the slumbering embers into flaming activity. In a very short time, the bricks were *red*, and the water boiling hot. The former were immersed in water, and then wrapped up in flannel, and laid to the stranger's feet and breast; the latter was converted into gruel, which, though not very thirsty, he drank with a very good appetite—having missed his supper that night on the hill.

"Noo, sir," said Nanny, "ye maun just lie down an' try if ye can get a gloffen o' sleep; for, I'll warrant, ye're baith tired an' drowsy, after sic a warstle amang the snaw. Gin ye want onything, Jamie an' me 'll just be sittin at the ingle here; but we'll mak nae din to disturb ye."

Thus heated within and without, the stranger soon lost all recollection of his wanderings, in a deep and refreshing sleep.

"The storm without might rair and rustle,
He didna mind the storm a whustle."

James betook himself to his old companion, Josephus; and Nanny sat down by the other side of the fire, and resumed her evening's employment, which had been the knitting of a pair of stockings for the guidman. She now felt all a mother's anxiety for the comfort of the stranger; and she frequently rose and peeped into the bed, to see how he rested; then returned to her husband, with a smile, and whispered into his ear—

"The lad's sleepin as sound as a tap, yet."

"The night passed away; and, by the time that daylight dawned down the *lum*—the little windows being drifted up with the snow—Nanny had prepared a warm breakfast for the stranger, the guidman, and herself. It consisted of oatmeal porridge, served up in two wooden platters, with a jugfull of milk and three horn spoons set down on the table between them. Nanny now awakened the stranger by asking how he had rested. She then took his clothes, which had been carefully dried and warmed before the fire; and, handing them into the bed, which had to serve the purpose of a dressing-room also, she closed the lids—remarking, that "the parritch was ready; an' it wad be better to sup them afore they got owre cauld." The stranger dressed and took a seat beside his kind entertainers. James asked a blessing, apologized for the coarseness of the fare, and dispatched his portion of the repast, in shorter time than a fashionable eater would take to stir about his coffee and crack the shell of his egg. It occurred to Nanny that she might make the porridge more agreeable to the stranger's delicate taste, by giving him cream, instead of milk, to sup them with. She, accordingly, brought her evening's *mellith*, and skimmed it into his dish, remarking, at the same time—

"Ye'll no like oor coorse way o' livin, sir; but hunger's guid kitchen, they say; an' that's no ill sap, I think, for it was just drawn frae the cow yestreen." The stranger assured her that he liked the dish exceedingly well; and, Nanny added—"Ye'll be used to drappies o' tea, I warrant; but we haena had ootower twa brewins i' the hoose since we were married; and, though a wee sirple o't may do brawly when the sap's scarce, yet I aye thocht that it was an unco feckless sort o' a diet, for a man body especially."

After breakfast, the young student (for such was the stranger) gave his entertainers an account of his wildered wanderings on the hill, as we have already narrated them; and James explained all the mysteries which he had met with, to his entire satisfaction. We shall only give his exposition of the last; namely, the fearful mingling of sounds which had alarmed him so much when he approached the lake. These were occasioned by the breaking up of the ice, which, driven ashore in innumerable fragments, by the wind, rose and fell with every wave, making a confused tinkling, like the ringing of a thousand little bells.

The storm had now abated; and, though the roads in many places were entirely blocked up, by keeping along the high ground it was possible for a person on foot to pursue his journey. The stranger, who was travelling to the College of St Andrew's, prepared to depart. He offered Nanny such a sum of money as he could spare, in acknowledgment of her kindness; but she refused it.

"Hoot, sir!" said she, "we'll hae nae reward. Only look what a dad o' a stockin I've wrocht, that wadna been wrocht gin ye hadna been here; and the guidman's gotten as muckle lear oot o' that auld book, as may ser' him for a twalmonth to crack aboot; sae, ye see, we hae made some profit o' yer visit, foreby a' the pleasure o' yer company."

James also refused money; and still further enhanced his kindness, by accompanying the stranger to the top of the hill, where he gave him the best directions with respect to the road, and bade him an affectionate farewell.

Many years after this, a medical student from the neighbourhood, was attending the lectures of the celebrated Dr B—— of Edinburgh, who one evening intimated a desire to speak with him after the class was dismissed. He accordingly waited, and the Doctor opened the conversation by inquiring if he knew an individual of the name of James W——, who lived near the village of Lindores. He was answered in the affirmative.

"Well," said the Doctor, "I owe my life to the exertions of that old man and his wife; and I received my first lessons in medical science from them. When I was a student at the College of St Andrew's, I lost my way among the hills, and was nearly smothered among the snow. I, at last, discovered their cottage, and was kindly admitted. Like all good knights of *misventure*, I fainted and fell down upon the floor. James and his wife held a consultation over me, and I afterwards came to learn, that even here, 'doctors differed.' James was an Empiric, and argued from experience, or experiment, that cold water and friction was the best remedy for numbed fingers. Nanny adhered to the Dogmatics, and inferred, from reason and nature, that heat was the best application for driving away cold.

"Thus Epilogism and Dogmatism contended in the mouths of people who had probably never heard of the names of Aristotle and Plato in their lives. But, in my case, both the systems were adopted with advantage. I was resuscitated by the empiric with cold, and recovered by the theorist with heat. And, what is more wonderful still, my kind physicians, unlike all other members of the profession, refused to take any fee. But they are not forgotten. They cast their bread upon the water, and they shall find it again after many days."

We shall only add, that, in a short time after this, James received an elegantly silver-mounted snuff-box, bearing the following inscription:—"From Dr B—— to James W——. 'I was a stranger and ye took me in.'"

Nanny at the same time received a more useful present; and both rejoiced that they had once possessed an opportunity of being useful to a man whose genius had made him an honour to his country, and an ornament to the profession to which he belonged

WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

SKETCHES FROM A SURGEON'S NOTE-BOOK.

Chap. XIII.—The Bereaved.

By looking over the memorial of my professional life, and writing out the extended details of my experience, I am, in effect, living my life over again. Most of the scenes I witnessed left such an impression upon my mind, that it requires only the touch of the *caduceus* of the witching power of memory, to call them all up again with a vividness scarcely less than that by which they were formerly presented to me. There is only this difference, that my remembered experiences, now invested with a species of borrowed light, seem like scenery which one has seen in the glance of a mid-day sun, presented again to the dreamy "evening sense" under the soft blue effulgence of the waning harvest-moon; the trees with the sere leaf rustling under the fluttering wing of the night bird; and the dead silence, which is not broken by the internal voice that speaks the words that have been spoken by those who lie under the yew tree. In an early leaf of my journal, I find some broken details of a visit I paid to Mr B——, a rich manufacturer in the town where I began my practice; but which I left when I had more confidence in those humble powers of ministering to the afflicted, which have raised me to an honourable station, and supplied me with the means of passing my old age in affluence. This individual had lost his wife—a very amiable woman, with whom he had lived a period of twenty-five years—and took on grief so heavily, that he was unfit to attend the funeral. He lay in bed, and would not be comforted. Having attended his wife, I continued my attentions to the husband. Three days had passed since his wife had been buried, and, during all that time, he had eaten nothing; and, what augured gloomily for his fate, he had never been heard to speak, or sigh, or even to give vent to his sufferings in a single groan. There seemed to have fallen over him a heavy load, which, pressing with deadly force upon the issues of life, defied those reacting energies of nature, which usually struggle, by sighs and groans, to throw off the incubus of extraordinary griefs.

I have met with many wiseacre-sceptics who laugh at the idea of what is vulgarly called a "broken heart," as a direct consequence either of unrequited love or extraordinary grief—admitting, however, in their liberality, that death may ensue from great griefs operating merely as an inductive original cause, which, destroying gradually the foundations of health, bring on a train of other ailments, that may, in the end, prove mortal. The admission goes for nothing, as a matter of every-day experience; and the original proposition to which it is adjected as a qualification, remains as a truth which may humble the pride of man, and speak to the sceptic through the crushed heart of a fatal experience. I have seen many instances of the fatal effects of grief as a direct mortal agent, killing, by its own unaided energies, as certainly, though not in so short a time, as a blow or a wound in the vital organs of the human body. The common nosologies contain no name for the disease, because, in truth, it cannot properly be called a disease, any more than a stab with a sword can deserve that name; and this, combined with the fact that it is only in a very few instances that the *coup* works by itself, without the aid of some ailment generated by it, that young practitioners often homologate the vulgar notions that prevail upon this important subject.

Among all the many causes of grief to which mankind are daily exposed, I know not that there is one that strikes so deeply into the secret recesses of the vital principle as the loss of a dearly-beloved wife, who has lived with a man for a lengthened period, through early adversity and late prosperity—borne him a family which have bound closer the tie that was knitted by early affection, and who has left him to tread the last weary stages of existence alone, and without that support which almost all men derive from woman. The effects are often supposed to be proportioned to the affection; yet I doubt if this solves the curious problem of the diversity of consequences resulting from this great privation. There are many men of strong powers of mind, who are so constituted that they *cannot* but press heavily on the support of another. They seem almost to live through the thoughts and feelings of their helpmates; and the energies they take credit for in the busy affairs of the world, have their source—unknown often to themselves—in the bosom of wedded affection. It is in proportion to the strength of the habit of this *leaning*, combined, doubtless, with the coexistent affection, that the effects of the loss of a helpmate, in the later period of life, work with such varied influence on the survivor. It may also seem a curious fact, and I have no doubt of the truth of it, that a man when advanced in years is much more apt to break suddenly down under this visitation than a woman; while, again, the consequence would seem to be reversed if the calamity has overtaken them in the more early stages of the connection. These are grounds for speculation. At present I have only to do with facts.

The individual whose case has suggested these observations, presented, when I saw him first after the funeral of his wife, the symptom—present in all cases of an utterly crushed spirit—of a wish to die. I was the first to whom he had uttered a syllable since the day on which she had been carried out of the house which she had so long filled with the spirit of cheerfulness and comfort. His only daughter, Martha, a fine young woman, had contributed but little to his relief—if she had not, indeed, increased his depression by her own emotions, which she had no power to conceal; and his only son had gone off to Edinburgh, to attend his classes in the college, where he intended to graduate as a physician. He was thus, in a manner, left in a great degree alone; for his daughter sought her apartment at every opportunity, to weep over her sorrows unobserved; and she had naturally thought that her father's grief, attended by no exacerbations of groaning or weeping like her own, presented less appearance of intensity than that which convulsed her own heart, and got relief by nature's appointed modes of alleviation. When the heart is stricken with a certain force, all forms of presenting less gloomy views of the condition of the individual, will generally be found to be totally unavailing in affording relief. Nay, I am satisfied that there was genuine philosophy in the custom of the

Greeks and the ancient Germans, in *forcing* victims of great sorrows to *weep* out the rankling barbed shaft. These had a species of licensed mourners, whose duty it was to soften the heart by melting strains of mournful melody, whereby, as by the application of a bland liniment, the rigid issues of the feelings were softened and opened, and the oppressed organ, the heart, was relieved of the load which defies the force of argument, and even the condolence of friendship. The curing of cold-nips by the appliance of snow, and of burns by the application of heat, could not have appeared more fraught with ridicule to the old women of former days, than would the custom I have here cited to the comforters of modern times. If I cannot say that, amongst some bold remedies, I have recommended it, I have, at least, avoided, on all occasions, officious endeavours to counteract the oppressing burden, by wrenching the mind from the engrossing thought—a process generally attended with no other result than making it adhere with increased force.

The greatest triumph that can be effected with the truly heart-stricken victim, to whom is denied the usual bursts that indicate a bearable misfortune, or, at least, one whose intensity is partly abated, is the bringing about of that more natural condition of the heart, which, indeed, is generally most feared by the ordinary paraclete. In the case of the bereaved husband, there is no charm so powerful in its effects as the vivid portrayment of the virtues of her who has gone down to the grave; and it may well be said, that the heart that will not give out its feelings to the impassioned description of the amiable properties of the departed helpmate, is all but incurable. The sister of Mr B——, who saw the necessity of administering relief, tried to awaken him to a sense of religious consolation; but he was as yet unfit even for that sacred ministration; and all her efforts having failed to rouse him, even from the death-like stupor in which he lay, she had recourse, by my advice, to probing the wound, to take off the stricture by which the natural humours were pent up. She discoursed pathetically on the qualities of the departed, which, she said, would be the passport of her spirit to a sphere where he would again contemplate them unclouded by the dingy vapours of earthly feelings. She kept in the same strain for a lengthened period; but declared to me, when I visited him again, that he exhibited no signs of being moved by her discourse. He, once or twice, turned his eyes on her for a moment, drew occasionally a heavy sigh, that told, by the difficulty of the operation, the load with which he was oppressed; but his eyes were dry, no groan escaped from him, or any other sign of the heart being aided in an effort to restore the current of natural feeling. The *coup de peine* had too clearly taken the very core of the heart; the lamp of hope had been dashed out violently, and, under the cloud of his great evil, all things that remained to him upon earth were tinged with its dark hues. He presented all the appearances—except the dilation of the pupil of the eye—of one whose brain had been concussed by a deep fall, or laboured under a fracture of the bones of the *cranium*. The few words he spoke to me came slowly, with a heavy oppressive sound, as if spoken through a hollow tube; and what may, to some, be remarkable, though certainly not to me, they embraced not the slightest allusion to his bereavement—a symptom almost invariably attendant upon those deeper strokes of grief, which, being but seldom witnessed, are much less understood in their effects, than the more ordinary oppressions, whose intense demonstrations and allusions to the cause of the evil, mark the victims as objects for the portrayments of poets.

Two or three days passed off in this way, without the slightest amelioration of his condition. The efforts of Miss B—— had been repeated often without effect. As she expressed herself to me, he would neither eat nor speak sleep nor weep. "He has not," she added, "even muttered her name. His heart seems utterly broken; and time and the power of Heaven alone will effect a change." Such is the common philosophy of sorrow: time is held forth as all-powerful, all-saving; and while I admit its force, I only insist for the certainty of the existence of exceptions. The eighth day had passed without any support having been taken to sustain the system. A course of maceration, that had been going on during his wife's illness, was thus continued; yet, in the few words I occasionally drew from him, there was no indication of anything like the sullen determination of the suicide; the cause lay in the total cessation of the powers of the stomach—a consequence of the cerebral pressure, whose action is felt not where it operates primarily, but in the heart and other organs, where it works merely by sympathy.

It was on the evening of the eighth day after the funeral, as I have it noted, that I called to see if any change for the better had been effected by the ministrations of his sister. She sat by his bedside, with the Bible placed before her, from which she had been reading passages to him. His face was turned to the front of the bed, but he did not seem to be in any way moved by my entrance. All the efforts his sister had made to get him to enter into the spirit of the passages she had been reading, had been fruitless; nor had he as yet made the slightest allusion to the cause of his illnesss, or mentioned the name of his deceased partner. A few words of no importance, and not related to the circumstances of his grief, were wrung from him painfully, by my questions; but it seemed as if the language that represents the things of the world had lost all power of charming the ear; the deadness that had overtaken the heart like a palsy, was felt from the fountain of feelings, to the minute endings of the nerves; and the external senses, which are the ministers of the soul, had renounced their ordinary ministrations to the spirit that heeded them not. Only once his sister had observed a slight moisture rise for a moment in his eye, as she touched some tender traits of the character of the departed; but it passed away rather as an evidence of the utter powerlessness of nature, in a faint heave of the reactive energy, telling at once how little she could perform, yet how much was necessary to overcome the weight by which she was oppressed. I sat for some moments silent by the side of the bed, and meditated a recourse to some more strenuous effort directed to his sense of duty as a parent; though I was aware, that until the heart is in some degree relieved, all such appeals are too often vain, if not rather attended with unfavourable effects; but, in extreme cases, we are not entitled to rest upon the generality of theories where so various and mutable an essence as the human mind is the object to which they are to be applied. I was on the point of making a trial, by recurring to the position of his son and daughter, when I heard the sounds of a horse's feet approaching, with great rapidity, the door. The sister started; and I could hear Martha open the window above, to ascertain who might be the visiter. In another moment the outer door opened with a loud clang. Some one approached along the passage, in breathless haste. He entered. It was George B——, under the excitement of some strong internal emotion; his eyes gleaming with a fearful light, and his limbs shaking violently. He stood for a moment as if he were gathering his energies to speak; but the words stuck in his throat, the sounds died away amidst the noise of an indistinct jabbering. I noticed the eye of his father fixed upon him, betraying only a very slight increase of animation; but even this extraordinary demeanour of his son did not draw from him a question; so utterly dead to all external impulses had his grief made him, that the harrowing cause of so much excitement in his son remained unquestioned by the feelings of the

parent. In another moment the youth was stretched across the bed, locking the father in his embrace, and sobbing out inarticulate words, none of which I could understand. The aunt was as much at a loss to solve the mystery of the violent paroxysm as myself; for some time neither of us could put a question; the sobbings of the youth seemed to chain up our tongues by the charm of the eloquence of nature's impassioned language. Meanwhile, Martha entered, ran forward to the bedside, lifted her brother from the position which he occupied, and seated him, by the application of some force, on the empty chair that stood by the side of the bed.

"What is the matter, George?" she cried; the question was repeated by the aunt, and the eyes of the parent sought languidly the face of the youth, which was, however, now covered by his hands. The question was more than once repeated by both the aunt and myself; the father never spoke, nor could I perceive a single ray of curiosity in his eye. He seemed to await the issue of the son's explanation, heedless what it might be—whether the announcement of a great or a lesser evil—its magnitude, though transcending the bounds of ordinary bearing, comprehending every other misfortune that fate could have in store for him, being, whatever might be its proportions, as nothing to the death-stricken heart of one whose hope was buried.

"This is scarcely a time or an occasion, George," said I, "for the manifestation of these emotions. If the cause lies in the grief, come back with increased force, for the death of your mother, you should have known that there is one lying there whose load is still greater, and who is, unfortunately, as yet, beyond the relief which, as your agitation indicates, nature in the young heart is working for you."

"The death!—the death!" he muttered, in a choking voice; "but there is something after the death that is worse than the death itself."

"Are you distracted, George?" said the aunt. "This Bible was the hand-book and the rule of your mother's conduct in this world. A better woman never offered up her prayers at the fountain of the waters of immortal life; no one that ever lived had a better right to draw from the blessing, or better qualified for enjoying it as she now enjoys it. She is in heaven; and will you say that that is worse than death?"

"You speak of her spirit, aunt," replied he, as he still covered his face with his hands. "Her spirit is there!"—and he took his hand from his face and pointed to heaven—"There, where the saints rest, does my mother's soul rest; but, O God, where—where is the body?"

A thought struck me on the instant. I was afraid to utter it. I looked at the father, and suspected, from the sudden light of animation that started to his eye, that the gloom of his mind had at last been penetrated by the thought which had suggested itself to me.

"Where is the body!" responded the aunt. "Why, George, where should it be but in C—— churchyard, beneath the stone that has told the virtues of her ancestors, and will, in a short time, declare her own, greater than those of her kindred that have gone before her?"

"It is on Dr M——'s table!" cried the youth, starting to his feet, and again throwing himself violently on the chair. "I purchased it; paid the price for it; and recognised it only when the dissecting-knife was in my hand!" Every one started aghast; terror froze up the issues of speech; a deep groan issued from the bed-ridden patient; he beckoned me to his ear. "Tell the women to go out," he whispered, as he twisted his body convulsively among the bedclothes.

I complied with his request; and the aunt, seizing Martha, who stood as if she had been transfixed to the floor, dragged her out of the room. In the passage, I heard a loud scream; and, in a moment, all was again silence. Mr B——, without uttering a word, raised his feeble body from the bed, and came forth, the spectre of what he was only a few weeks before. His limbs, which were reduced to bony shanks, covered with shrivelled skin, seemed totally unable to support even the decayed, emaciated frame. He staggered as he reached the floor; but, recovering himself, stood firm, and then proceeded to his wardrobe, from which he drew his vestments, and proceeded to attire himself.

"An hour since," he said, in a slow, solemn voice, "I thought these clothes would never again be on my body. My only hope was the winding-sheet, and that grave which has been robbed."

"George may have been deceived," said I, as he was proceeding to dress himself. "I have often thought that I saw resemblances to deceased friends in the features of subjects in the dissecting-room."

"The grave will test it," answered he, with a deep groan, as he proceeded slowly, but resolutely, to put one garment after another on his skeleton body.

He was at length dressed; and, proceeding to the kitchen, he appeared again, in a short time, with a lighted lantern in his hand; the light of which, as it threw its beam on his sallow face—for the candle had, meanwhile, burned down into the socket—exhibited, in its horn-sent, lurid glare, the deep-sunken eyes and protruding bones of his emaciated countenance.

"Come, we shall proceed to the grave of my Isabella," said he.

"You are unable," said I. "Your limbs will not carry you that length; and you are, besides, unfitted, by the state of your mind and feelings, for an investigation of this kind. Stay here with your son, and I will go to the churchyard, and satisfy myself of the deception under which George, doubtless, labours."

"I feel now more than my former strength," he replied. "I am awakened from a death-stupor of the soul; and I feel that within me which will enable me to go through this trial. I will look into my Isabella's grave; will meet with those eyes again—that countenance through which I have read the workings of love in a spirit that is now far from the precincts of the clay. Deny me not; I will be satisfied of this, if I should come back from her grave to complete that which is begun, and is already visible in these shrunken members, that now obey a supernatural power."

There seemed to be no gainsaying him; his manner was inspired and resolute; and I proceeded to accompany him to C—— churchyard. George, who, in the meantime, had been tossing himself in the chair, rose to make one of the party. The agitation under which he still laboured was in direct contrast to the cold stillness of his father; yet the one was a more living expression than the other; and, while my eye shrunk not from the ordinary indications of suffering, I—maugre all the experience of misery I had had—could scarcely look on the animated corpse thus preparing to visit the grave where the object of all his hopes and affections in this world had been buried, and might now be found to have been desecrated by the cold knife of the anatomist. We went forth together. George's horse still stood at the door, reeking and bloody. I requested Mr B—— to mount, as we had a full mile to go to the burying-ground, and I deemed it utterly impossible that he could accomplish the distance. He did not answer me, but proceeded onwards with a firm step, in the face of a cold, bleak, east wind, that moaned mournfully among a clump of trees that skirted the road. Some flakes of snow were winging through the air—driven now by the breeze, or lingering over our heads as if afraid to be soiled by the earth, which we were bent to open where the dead then lay—or some time before lay—a mass of putrefaction; yet dear

to the feelings of the bereaved, and sought now with greater avidity than when the body was arrayed in the smiles of beauty, and filled with living, breathing love. The husband spoke nothing; and George was silent, save for the deep sobs that burst from him as he looked upon the wo-worn form of his father, who stalked away before us like a creature who hurried to the grave to seek the home there from which a troubled spirit had removed him in the dark hour of night. In this way we wandered on. I was not in a mood to speak. The occasion and the scene depressed me more than ever did the prospect of a deathbed, or the sight of a patient about to submit to a painful and dangerous operation. My habits of thought are little conversant with the poetry of nature, or of man's condition in this stage of suffering—the duties of an arduous profession are exclusive of those dreamy moods of the mind, which have little in common with the doings of every-day-life; yet, on this occasion, I felt all the inspiration of the sad muse; and, were I to endeavour to account for it, I could only seek for the cause in the aspect of the night, and the unusual nature of the vocation, operating, at the moment, on a mind loosened from the cares of my profession.

In a much less time than I could have anticipated, from the weak condition of Mr B——, we arrived at the churchyard—a solitary spot, surrounded with an old grey dyke, at the back of which rose in deep shade a wood of firs. The snow lay on the top of the walls, and on the higher branches of the firs, reminding one of streaks of white clouds in the sky, as the darkness of the night, enveloping the lower portions, kept them almost from our view. From a small house at the ridge of the fir-belt, a slight rule of light beamed forth, and, striking upon the top of a monument placed against the wall, exhibited the left all around in deeper gloom. Without uttering a word, Mr B—— made up to the house, and, knocking at the door, a young female appeared. She uttered a scream, and ran back, doubtless from the pale and death-like appearance presented by the face of the visiter. Her place was momentarily supplied by the sexton, who, the moment he saw Mr B——, whom ae very well knew, shrunk back in what I conceived to be conscious fear. I was standing behind, and noticing, what I thought, the guilty expression of the man's face, concluded unfavourably for the sad hope of my friend.

"I have reason to believe that there have been resurrectionists in your churchyard, James," said Mr B—— mournfully.

"Impossible!" replied the sexton; "we have been guarding the ground for some time past. It is a dream, Mr B——; many relations are troubled by the same fears. It was only yesterday that I opened a grave to satisfy the wishes of Mrs G——, whose husband was buried a week ago. The body was as safe as if it had been in her own keeping. Take my advice; be satisfied there is no cause of apprehension; you forget the sacred nature of my trust."

"I can only be satisfied by an examination of the grave," replied Mr B——. "I insist upon having this satisfaction. The cemetery is my property, and I have a right to examine it."

The man hesitated, and said that his assistant was from home. But the bereaved husband was not to be thus diverted from his purpose. He stood resolutely with the lantern in his hand, and demanded admittance into the churchyard. The man at length reluctantly took down the key from a nail in the passage, and bringing another lantern with him, led us to the door, which, in the midst of many grumblings, he opened. He then led the way over the snowy hillocks to nearly the middle of the burying ground, where the grave of Mrs B——, headed by an ornamented stone, was exhibited to us. Mr B—— bent down, and, moving the lantern backwards and forwards, examined it slowly and carefully, casting his eye over the snow, which presented an unbroken appearance, and examining every chink, as if he there found an evidence of the truth of George's statement.

"That grave has not been touched," said the man. "The head of it is the part to judge by. You will find the turf lies whole and unbroken under the wreath."

"It may be as you say," replied Mr B——, as he bent down in his examination; "but the late snow may have removed the traces of the opening. I cannot return home till I am satisfied. My own bones must mix with those of my Isabella. Proceed to open the grave; I myself will assist you."

At that moment a figure was seen gliding alone amidst the tombstones. It had all the legitimate whiteness like the ideal spirit. I stood and gaxed at it, and George's eyes were also fixed upon it; Mr B—— paid no attention; he was too intent upon the investigation he was engaged in; and the gravedigger, whose head was down, did not notice it. I said nothing; but George, pointing to it as it approached, cried—

"See, see! what is that?"

The sexton looked up, and cried—"It is David. He has been out, and is covered with snow. He comes in good time."

It was even so. The man approached, and the implements having been procured, they set about opening the grave. Mr B—— stood motionless, his head hanging on his breast, and deep sighs occasionally coming from his breast, mixed with the quick breathing of the men, as they plied their shovels. He still held the lantern in his hand, by the light of which the group before me was brought out in faint relief. The silence around was signally that of a churchyard; for the fir belt shrouded the scene from the night breeze, and there was only occasionally heard a low, mournful gust, as it died among the branches of the trees. On that spot only there was quick breathing action. The men had got down pretty far into the grave; and, as they brought their heads within the ray of the lantern, in their acts of throwing up the earth, their flushed faces contrasted strongly with the cadaverous countenance of the husband, who leant over them, watching every motion, and intent upon the expected stroke of the shovel upon the coffin lid. The recollection of the attributes of the German gowl came over me; nor did the difference between the beings, the motives, and the actions, prevent me from conjuring up the similitude, so unlike a human being did he appear in his complexion, his fixed, dead-like stare into the grave, and the perfect stillness of his body, as he crouched down to be nearer to the object of his search. At length, the sound was heard, the rattle on the coffin lid. The victim's ear seemed chained to the sound, as if he could have augured from it whether or not the chest was empty. In a short time,

"The heavy moil that shrouds the dead"

was entirely removed. The sexton now took his own lamp down into the grave. The screw-nails were undone, the lid was raised, and the body of Mrs B——, arrayed in her winding-sheet and scalloped sere-clothes, was seen, by the sickly, yellow gleam of the lantern, lying in the stillness and placidity of death—

"For still, still she lay,
With a wreath on her bosom."

One of the men now came out, and Mr B—— descended into the grave. He lifted off the face-cloth, gazed on the clay-cold face, touched it, and now was opened the

"Sacred source of sympathetic tears."

He burst into a loud paroxysm; and, as if nature had been to take her revenge for her sufferings, under the freezing influence of his sorrow, he wept as if there had been to be no end of his weeping. It was latterly found necessary to force him out of the grave; though, as I was informed by

George, he had shrunk from the view of the dead body of his wife, while it lay in the house, and before it was interred. The lid was again placed on the coffin, the screws fixed, and the grave filled up. Mr B—— slipped a guinea into the hand of the sexton, and we took our way back to the town. George informed us, as we went, that he had been for several nights haunted by the image of his mother; and could only thus account for the conviction that had seized him, that the body of the female he had seen in the dissecting-room was that of his parent. It is a remarkable fact, and the one which chiefly induced me to give this narrative, that the scene I have now described wrought so powerfully on the feelings of Mr B——, that the form of his grief was entirely changed. During the whole of the subsequent night, he wept intensely—nature was relieved—his sorrow was mollified into one of those

"Moods that speak their softened woes;"

and time soon wrought its accustomed amelioration. I never saw one who seemed more certainly doomed to the fate of the heart-stricken; and, however fanciful it may seem, I attribute to the mistake of his son the restoration of the father.

Chap. XIV.—The Condemned.

I believe it was Fontenelle who said that, if he were to have been permitted to pass his life over again, he would have done everything he did in the world, and, of course, consented to suffer what he had suffered, in consideration of what he had enjoyed. I have heard the same statement from others. A very learned and ingenious professor in the north, whose lucubrations have often cast the effulgence of his rare genius over the pages of the Border Tales, has no hesitation in declaring that he would gladly consent to receive another tack of existence in this strange world, with all its pains and penalties, were it for nothing but to be allowed to witness the curious scenes, the startling occurrences, the humorous bizarrerie of cross-purposes, the conceits, the foibles, the triumphs of the creature man. Moore the poet has somewhere said, that he would not consent to live his life over again, except upon the condition that he were to be gifted with less love and more judgment—probably forgetting that in that case he would not have been the author of "Lallah Rookh;" though, mayhap, of a still drier life of Sheridan than that which came from his pen. I have often put the question to patients, and have found the answer to be regulated by the state of their disease. Upon the whole, it requires a very sharp, bitter pang, indeed, to extort the confession, that they would not accept another lease of life. If men were not Christians, they would choose, I think, to be Pythagoreans, were it for nothing but the slight chance they would enjoy of passing into some state of existence not in a remote degree different from that which they have declared themselves sick of a thousand times before they died. Sick of it as many, however, say they are, they would all live "a little and a little longer still," when the dread hour comes that calls them home. These remarks have been suggested by the following passage in my note-book:—"17th August ——, case of Eugene D——, in the jail of ——. Extraordinary example of the *amor vitæ*." I find I had jotted a number of the details; but such was the impression the scene of that tragedy of life produced in me, that even now, though many years have passed, I recollect the minutiæ of the drama as distinctly as if I had witnessed it yesterday. I was indeed interested in the case more than professionally; for the subject of it was an early companion of my own, and was, besides, calculated, from his acquirements, and a free, open generosity of spirit, to produce a deep interest in the fate which, in an unhappy hour, he brought upon himself. It was on the forenoon of the day I have mentioned, that the under turnkey of the prison of —— came in breathless haste, and called me to a prisoner. It was Eugene D——. I was at the moment occupied in thinking of the youth. He had forged a bill upon his father, Mr D——, a wealthy merchant; and it was very clearly brought out, in evidence, that he applied the money to extricate a friend from pecuniary embarrassments. The father had paid the bill; but the legal authorities had prosecuted the case; and he, at that moment, lay in jail a criminal, condemned to die. The gallows was standing ready to exact its victim within two hours; the post from London would arrive in an hour with or without a reprieve. His father and mother, what were they then doing, thinking, suffering? On them and him I was meditating, when the words of the turnkey fell upon my ear.

"What has occurred?" was my question to the messenger.

"Eugene D——, the condemned criminal, has taken some poisonous drug," said he, "and the provost has sent me for you to come to his relief."

I meditated a moment. It might have been as well, I thought, for all parties, that I had not been called, and that the drug, whatever it was, might be allowed to anticipate the law; but I had no alternative; I was called in my official capacity; and then a messenger might still arrive from London. I provided myself with the necessary counteracting agents, and followed the man. I passed the house of his father. The blinds were down, and all seemed wrapped in dead silence, as if there had been a corpse in the house. Several people were passing the house, and cast, as they went, a melancholy look at the windows. They had, in all likelihood, seen the gallows; at least, they knew the precise posture of affairs within the house. I was inclined to have entered; but I could see no benefit to be derived from my visit, and hurried forwards to the jail, from the window of which the black apparatus projected in ghastly array. The post-office in —— Street was in the neighbourhood, and an assembly of people were beginning to collect, to wait for the incoming of the mail. There was sympathy in every face; for the fate of the youth, who had been well esteemed over the town, for a handsome, generous-minded young man, and the situation of his parents—wealthy and respectable citizens—had called forth an extraordinary feeling in his favour. Indeed, thousands had signed the petition to the King; but forgery was, at that time, a crime of frequent occurrence, and the doubts that were entertained as to the success of the application were apparently justified by the arrival of the eleventh hour. On passing through the jail, I saw the various preparations in progress for the execution; the chaplain was in attendance; and, in a small cell, at the end of the apartment from which the fatal erection projected, there sat, guarded by an officer, from a fear that he would escape, the executioner himself—

"Grim as the mighty Polypheme."

My guide led me forward, and, in a few minutes, I stood beside Eugene, who, dressed in a suit of black, lay twisting his body in a chair, making the chains by which he was bound clank in a fearful manner. A small phial was on the floor. I took it up, and ascertained, in an instant, that he had betaken himself to the drug most commonly resorted to by suicides.

"Laudanum!" I exclaimed.

"Yes, yes—as much as would kill two men!" he cried wildly.

The poison had not had time to operate; or rather, its narcotic power had been suspended by the terrors of an awakened love and hope of life, that had followed close upon the prospect of death caused by his own act.

"You had a chance for life, Eugene," said I, hurriedly.

"A courier may yet arrive, independently of the mail, which has not yet come."

"Chance or no chance," he cried, as I proceeded with my assistant, who now entered, to apply the remedies; "I would yet live the two hours! I had no sooner swallowed the drug, than I thought I had intercepted the mercy of heaven; life seemed—and, oh, it even now seems—sweeter than ever, and death still more dreadful! Quick—quick—quick! The poison is busy with my heart. I would give a world for even these two hours of life and hope—small, small as that is!"

I proceeded with the application of the usual remedies. A portion, but only a portion of the laudanum, had been taken off; and the next efficient remedy was motion, to keep off the sleepy lethargy that drinks up the fountain of life. Two men were got to drag him as violently as possible along the floor, leaving him enough of his own weight to force him to use his limbs. I noticed that he struggled with terrible energy against the onset of the subtle agent; exhibiting the most signal instance I ever beheld of the power of that hope which seems to be consistent with life itself. Already an eighth part of the apparent period of his sojourn upon earth had passed. Seven quarters more would, in all likelihood, bring him to the scaffold, and, by resisting my energies to counteract the effects of the poison, he might have eluded the grim arm of the law, by a death a thousand times less dreadful. Every now and then, as the men dragged him along, he turned his eyes to me, and asked the hour. Sometimes he repeated the question within two minutes of my answer. As often was his ear directed to the street, to try to catch the sounds of a coach, or the feet of a horse; and then he redoubled his energies to keep off the onset of the lethargy, which I told him was most to be feared. The operation was persevered in; but the men informed me they thought he was gradually getting heavier on their hands, and I noticed his eye, at times, get so dull that he seemed to be on the eve of falling asleep and sinking. Another quarter of an hour soon passed; and in a little further time, the bailies and chaplain would find it their duty to come and prepare him for his fate—alas! now indeed so certain, that no reasonable thought could suggest even the shadow of a hope: a reprieve, so near the time of execution, would not have been trusted to the mail, and a messenger would have arrived, by quick stages, long before; unless there had, indeed, been any fault in the government authorities, in tampering with a man's life within an hour of his execution, If I had not been under the strict law of professional discipline, I would certainly have allowed him to lie down and pass into death or oblivion. I had, however, my duty to perform; and, strange as it may appear, that duty quadrated with the wishes of the young man himself; who, as he struggled with the demon that threatened to overpower him, seemed to rise in hope as every minute diminished the chance of his salvation. By the increased energies of the men, he was again roused into a less dull perception of sounds, and I could perceive him start as the rattle of the wheels of a carriage was heard at the jail door. He fixed his half-dead, staring eye in my face, and muttered, with a difficult effort of the sinking jaws—

"Is that it—is that it?—I hear a carriage wheels, and they have stopped at the door."

As he uttered the words, it appeared as if he again exerted himself to keep the enemy, who still threatened him, at bay. I replied nothing; for I suspected that the carriage brought only some official, or, probably, some mourner, to see him, previous to the fatal scene—that scene which, in all likelihood, I was endeavouring to render more heart-rending to his friends and spectators, by keeping alive the vital spark, that might only serve to make him conscious of pain It appeared to be too evident that he had increased tenfold the misery of his situation; for the stern law would admit of no excuse, and if he was not able to walk to the scaffold, he would be carried; yet, if I remitted my endeavours to keep in life, I might, in the event of the looked for reprieve still arriving, be liable to be accused, by my own conscience, of having been as cruel as the law itself. The door of the jail now opened, and a turnkey told me that the usual time had arrived when the officials began their preparatory duties. I replied that it was in vain to attempt, at present, the performance of these sacred rites: the prisoner was wrestling with death; and, if the exertions of the men, who kept still dragging him backwards and forwards, were remitted, he would sink, in a few minutes, into insensibility. I noticed the eye of poor Eugene turned imploringly upon me, as if he wished to know who it was that had arrived in the carriage. I merely shook my head; and the sign was no sooner made than his head fell down on his breast; his limbs became weaker, his knees bent, and if the supporters had not exerted themselves still farther, he would have sunk. But the men still performed their duty, and dragged him hurriedly along, scarcely now with any aid from his feet, which, obeying no impulse of the loose and flaccid muscles, were thrown about in every direction, with a shuffling, lumbering noise, and a clanking of the chain, that must have produced an extraordinary effect on those who waited in the adjoining cells. The noise thus produced was indeed all that was heard; for the effect of the poison was such as to take away all power of groaning. I was now doubtful if all the working of the men would be able to keep off much longer the sleepy incubus, for he seemed to have lost almost all power of seconding their efforts; but the door of the jail again opened, and the sound of the grating hinges made him again lift his head. His eye seemed to indicate that he had lost all sense of the passing of the moments, and I could not discover whether he looked for the entry of one bearing his letter of salvation, or of the jailer with his hammer, to knock the chain from his feet, and lead him forth to the scaffold. He again muttered some words as the turnkey was proceeding forward to where I was. I could not make them out, so faint had his voice now become; but one of the men said he wished to know the hour. I told him it was one o'clock—that was just one hour from the appointed termination of his life. The turnkey, meanwhile, whispered in my ear that his father, mother, and sister had arrived. It was the sound of their carriage wheels that we had heard. I enjoined upon the men the necessity of continuing their labours, and went out to prevent the entry of his parents to the witnessing of a scene transcending all their powers of bearing. I found the three standing in the recess where the executioner was sitting in gloomy silence. I took the father and mother by the arms, and hurried them away to the empty cell, where the chaplain and several officials were collected. The turnkey saw his error, and excused himself, on the ground that he was confused by the extraordinary state of affairs within the prison. I ascertained that no notice had been made to his parents of his having taken the drug. They had come to take farewell of him. The mail had arrived, but had brought no intelligence—not even of the petition having been disposed of; and, having given up all hope, their intention was that the mother and daughter should, after the last act of parting, fly to the country, to be as far as possible from the scene of the impending tragedy. I was the first who communicated the tidings of the condition of their son; and the noise in the prisoner's cell, as the men still continued their operations, was a sad commentary on my words. The sister, who was veiled, uttered a shrill scream, and fell back on the floor. The father stood like

"Wo's bleak, voiceless petrifaction.'

moving neither limb nor countenance; his eye was fixed steadfastly on the ground, and a deadly paleness was over his face. The mother, who was also veiled, staggered to a bench—recovering herself suddenly, as some thought, rising wildly, stung her to a broken utterance of some words. I approached her, while Mr H——, the chaplain, was assisting in getting Miss D—— to a chair.

"Let him die!—let him die!" she exclaimed. "Is not his doom inevitable? You will torture my Eugene by keeping in his life till the law demands its victim, and he may be carried—carried! O God!—to a second death, ten times more cruel than that which he is now suffering."

"No rejection of the petition has been intimated," I replied; "and there is hope to the last grain in life's ebbing glass. It is not yet two years since a reprieve came to a prisoner, in this very jail, within three hours of the appointed term of his life. You have spoken from the impulse of an agony which has overcome the truer feelings of a mother and the better dictates of prudence."

"Small, small, indeed, is that hope which a mother may not see through the gloom of a despair such as mine," she replied. "But what means that dreadful noise in Eugene's cell?"

"Only the efforts of the men to keep him awake," replied I. "My duty requires my efforts in behalf of a fellow-creature to the last moment. Reflect for a moment, and the proper feeling will again vindicate its place in the heart of a parent."

"Dreadful alternative!" she replied. "But, sir, hear me. I am his mother, and I tell you, from the divination of a mother's heart, that there will now be no respite. I say it again; it would be a relief to me if I heard, at this moment, that he had escaped by death that tragedy which will now be rendered a thousand times more painful to him and dreadful to me."

The father moved his eyes, and fixed them on the face of the mother of his boy, who, in her agony, thus called for his death in a form which bore even a shade of relief from the horror of what awaited the victim. It was, indeed, an extraordinary request; and told, as no words spoken by mortal had ever told, the pregnancy of an anguish that could seek for alleviation (if I may use so inadequate a phrase) from so fearful an alternative. All were, for a time, now silent, and there was no sound to be heard but the deep sobs of the daughter, as she recovered from her swoon; the struggles in the throat of the mother; and the shuffling and tramping in the cell of the prisoner.

"There is still hope," I whispered in the ear of the mother.

"None—none!" she ejaculated again. "My Eugene! my Eugene!"

She reclined back, with her hands over her face, still sobbing out the name of her son. I pointed to the father to assist her, while I should go again to ascertain the state of the son; but he did not seem to understand me—retaining still his rigid position, and looking with the calmness of despair on the scene around him. Her silence continued but a few moments; and, when she opened her eyes again, it was to fix them on me.

"What are you doing?" she exclaimed again. "What, in the name of heaven, are you doing to my Eugene? Saving him for a second, and still more cruel death. It might have been all over. Let me see him—let me see him!"

And she rose to proceed to the cell where her son was confined; but her strength failed her, and she again reclined helplessly back in her seat. The clergyman's ministrations were called for by these uttered sentiments, which seemed so little in accordance with the precepts of holy writ, however natural to the bursting heart of a mother, to whom the reported death of her son, in his unparalleled situation, might almost have been termed a boon. Retreating from a scene so fraught with misery, I hastened back to Eugene, who was still in the arms of the men. One of them whispered to me that he had spoken when he heard the shrill cry of his sister; but, immediately after, he relapsed again into his stupor. The men complained of being exhausted by their efforts to keep him moving. His weight was now almost that of the dead body; and it was only at intervals that he made any struggles to move himself by the aid of his paralyzed limbs. Two other individuals were got to relieve them; and the compulsory motions were continued. The lethargy had not altogether mastered the sentient powers; and, the operation having been stopped that I might examine his condition, he lifted his head slowly, looked round him with a vacant stare, and, after a few moments, muttered again the word "hour." I pulled out my watch, and told him that it was twenty minutes past one. He understood me, as I thought; and, pronouncing indistinctly "mother," he again sank into apparent listlessness. The men again resumed their work.

Meanwhile, a buzz from without intimated too distinctly that the mob were collecting to witness the fate of their townsmen. There was no distinct sound, save that which a mass of people, under the depressing feelings of sorrow, seem to send forth involuntarily—making the air, as it were, thick, and yet with no articulation or distinct noise which can be caught by the ear of one at a distance, or within the walls of a house. Eugene, I am satisfied, was unable to recognise the faint indication. It was well for him. I learned, from the turnkey, that the sound of the hammer in the erection of the gallows had put him almost distracted, and precipitated the execution of the purpose, which he had wished to delay till after the arrival of the mail. I had little doubt that he might now be kept from the grasp of the death-stupor for the remaining three quarters of an hour; but, alas! what would be my triumph? Every minute added to the certainty that I was only preparing for him and his relations greater pain; for, in any view, he could not walk to the fatal spot without as much aid as might have sufficed to carry him; and it was even more than probable that he would be so much overcome that that latter operation would require to be resorted to, under the stern sanction of a law that behoved to be put in force within a given time, or not at all. The case I am now describing might suggest some considerations worthy of the attention of our legislators, who, arrogating to themselves a license as wide as the limits of the human mind, deny all manner of discretion to the superintendants of the last execution of the law. We profess to be abhorrent from scenes of torture, as well as, on grounds of policy, hostile to a species of punishment which, indeed, defeats its own ends; and yet I could give more than one case where the substance has been retained in all its atrocity, while the form was veiled by flimsy excuses of a false necessity. My situation was now a very painful one indeed. I was training and supporting the victim for the altar; rescuing from death only to sacrifice him with more bloody rites and a crueller spirit of immolation. The words of his mother, wrung from the agony of a parent's love, rang in my ears; the look of the father—that of imbecile despair—was imprinted on my mind; the hour was fast on the wing; all hope had perished; and before me was the unfortunate youth, handsome, elegant, and interesting, even in the writhings of the master-fiend, suffering a death which was to be, in effect, repeated, in another and a crueller form. I had seen him under circumstances of friendship, and the ebullitions of his generous spirit; and I was become, as I pictured to myself, his enemy, who would not allow him

to die, to escape from shame and an increased agony of dissolving nature. Will I admit it? For a moment or two I hesitated; and, indeed, had half-resolved to tell the men to stop—the time might yet have sufficed for finishing what he had begun. If he was not dead before two, he would, at least, be beyond feeling; and, if the officials chose to take the last step of getting him carried to the gallows, they would in effect be immolating a corpse.

My better and calmer thoughts of duty, however, prevailed; and, in the meantime, I saw the prudence of preventing any meeting between Eugene and his parents, which could tend to nothing but an increase of pain on the side of those who were still able to feel—for, as regarded the young man himself, he was beyond the impulse of the feelings that might otherwise have been called up, even by such a scene. I was not even ill pleased to hear from the under turnkey, that the magistrates had given orders for the departure of the friends; though, for my own satisfaction, I wished that the father, who had still some command of himself, might visit his son for a few minutes, and sanction my proceedings with his approbation. I was informed also by the turnkey, that the father was resisting to the utmost of his power the efforts of the mother to get into the cell. He probably saw too clearly, that in the excited condition in which she still remained, the scene might prove disastrous, as affecting either life or reason; and, if I could judge from what I myself felt in spite of the blunting effects of a long acquaintanceship with misery in its various phases, there was good reason for his fears. The scene presented features

"Direr than incubus's haggard train."

I had just looked my watch—it wanted now only twenty minutes of the last hour. The order for the friends to quit the jail was about to be obeyed. The father sent a messenger for me. I repaired to the cell; but, to avoid the appeals of the mother and daughter, I beckoned him forth to the lobby. He asked me whether he should see his son now that he was all but insensible, and could not probably recognise him. He feared that he could not stand the scene, for that the calmness he assumed was false. I replied that it certainly required no ordinary firmness; and yet the pain might in some degree be even lessened by the state of stupor and insensibility in which the youth still continued. He fixed his eyes on my face with an expression of forced and unnatural calmness, that pained me more than the death-like inanity of the still beautiful countenance of his son, or the hysterical excitement of the mother. He at last seized my hand and proceeded along to the cell hurriedly, as the turnkey was crying loudly for the friends to depart. We entered and stood for a moment. He stood and gazed at his son, as the latter was still kept moving by the men; but Eugene was apparently unconscious of the presence of his parent. A loud cry from the dense crowd who had assembled to witness the execution, struck my ear. I ran to the window, and saw a man in the act of coming off a horse, whose sides were covered with foam and blood. The cries of the crowd continued, and I could distinctly hear the word "*reprieve*" mixed with the shouts. Mr D—— was at my back, and I felt his hands press me like a vice. The two men who were supporting Eugene, had also heard the sound, and, paralysed by the extraordinary announcement, they actually let the prisoner sink on the floor. The sound of his fall made me turn; the father had vanished, doubtless to meet the messenger, and communicate the tidings to his wife and daughter. A great bustle in the neighbouring cells succeeded. The two men stood and looked at me in silence. Eugene still lay on the floor, to all appearance insensible. By my orders he was immediately again lifted up, and dragged more violently than ever, backwards and forwards. In a few seconds, the turnkey came in, and struck off the irons, by which his ancle had been so severely torn that the blood flowed from it on the floor. He informed me that he was indeed reprieved, and that the fault of the delay was attributable to the authorities in London. I shouted in the ear of the young man the electric word; he lifted his head, looked wildly around him for a few seconds, and uttered a strange gurgling sound unlike any expression of the human voice I ever heard. I was indeed uncertain whether he understood me or not. In a few minutes more, the cell was crowded—the father, mother, and daughter, the chaplain, the messenger, and several of the officials, all bursting in, to see the condition of the criminal. To this, I was not averse; because the more excitement that could be produced in the mind of the youth, the greater chance remained of our being able to keep off the deadly effects of the drug. A thousand times did the parent and mother sound into his dull ear the vocable pregnant with so much relief to him and his friends; but it was not until two hours afterwards that he was so far recovered as to understand perfectly the narrow escape he had made from death. In the evening he was conveyed home in a carriage; and, as they were leaving the jail, he looked out at the grim apparatus which had been erected for him, and which the workmen were removing in the midst of a dense crowd of citizens.

Some days afterwards, Eugene D—— had almost entirely recovered from the effects of the poison. One day when I called, I found him lying on a sofa, with his mother sitting by his side. She took her eyes off her son, and bent them on me till tears filled them.

"Before you entered," she said, "I was talking to Eugene about the request I made to you in the jail on that dreadful day, to let my son die. Repeatedly since, have I thought of my wild words; but they know little of human nature, at least little of the feelings of a mother in my situation, who could brand them as unnatural, or doubt the sanity that recognised fully their effect."

"I am too well apprised, madam," I replied, "of the workings of that organ whose changes often startle ourselves, to be surprised at the words you then made use of. I knew not after all, if you did not exhibit as much heroism as Brutus, who condemned his son to death; certainly more than Zaleucus, who condemned his to the loss of an eye, having first submitted to the loss of one of his own, to make the love of a father quadrate with the justice of the lawgiver.

"And what say you to yourself, to whom I owe the safety of my Eugene?" she added.

"An Acesias might have accomplished all that I accomplished, madam—for all I did was to keep off sleep; but, if the secret must need be told, I had some doubts at least of the humanity of my proceedings, whatever I might have thought of my duty."

Eugene afterwards went to the East Indies, where he made a fortune. Some pecuniary embarrassments afterwards overtook the family, on which occasion he sent them home the one half of the money he had made, whereby they were again placed in a condition of affluence. A present was also sent to me. It is not yet very many years ago since I saw Eugene. He had assumed another name in India, where he had married a very beautiful woman, and to whom he again returned.

WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

JOHN SQUARE'S VOYAGE TO INDIA.

Having been so much edified by Sergeant Square's narrative of the Palantines, (No. 202,) I was anxious to hear another section of his adventures. Next day, my wish was gratified.

"After my arrival in Greenock from my voyage to America," he began—"that land of promise, where I had been carried as a Palantine—I had no wages to receive; for I had wrought my passage home—that is, given my labour for my food and room in the vessel, and was not entered as one of the crew. A miserable passage it was; for the captain being as complete a tyrant as ever walked a deck, the crew were ill-used, and, of course, sulky and dissatisfied; and, humble and obedient as I was, the bad humour of every one was put forth upon me. The little seamanship I had been so eager to acquire in my voyage out, now stood me in great stead, and saved me many a kick and blow. Rough and severe as my masters were, my progress was rapid. Young and nimble as a monkey, with a quick eye and good memory, I was no despicable seaman before we reached the Cumbraes. Even the Captain, after a severe squall we had off the west of Ireland, commended me, saying—'Square, you are worth your room and victuals!' Yet of room I had little; and my victuals were no boast. Hammock or bedding I had none; but that mattered not to me, who had no rest. I was in no watch, but was called up or started with a rope's end at the pleasure of every one, when there was anything to do, from the cable tier, or wherever I had stretched my weary limbs to snatch an hour's sleep. Still I bore up with a cheerful heart; for hard lying and scanty fare were nothing new to me, and I hoped soon to tread the shores of my native land. Well, I had only two dollars and a half in my pocket when I left Greenock to walk to Auld Reekie. My step was as light as my heart. Towards sunset of the second day, I reached the city; and, before I thought of rest, I had visited all my former haunts. But a very few days served to dissipate my pleasing dreams of home. I had, for years before I left Edinburgh, been looked upon as one too many in the city by those who knew me as a dependant; and, doubtless, when I disappeared, they had felt relieved of a load they bore but lightly. I had returned as poor as I departed; and they looked upon me with frowns, upbraiding me with folly for my return from a place where I had a chance of succeeding.

In my wanderings, I had entered the King's Park by the eastern stile, at the watering stone, when, as I approached Mushet's Cairn, in the Duke's Walk, I heard the clashing of swords on the other side of the low wall. Urged by curiosity, I mounted the heap of stones, to obtain a sight of the combatants. My eyes became fixed upon them; my whole mind was filled with so ardent, so intense an interest, that I could scarcely breathe; yet my feelings were so painful, at first, that my heart beat thick, and my limbs shook under me. At one instant, I felt a desire to part them—the next, to see the scene enacted and ended. I had in my mind already taken a side, and wished 'my man' to conquer. They were both, to appearance, gentlemen, and about the same age and stature; one of them much slighter made than the other, who pressed him hard, while he appeared to act principally on the defensive; and so cool and dexterous was he in the use of his sword, that his opponent, though equally master of his, was foiled in all his assaults. It was fearfully grand to see two men so intent upon the destruction of each other. Their looks spoke hatred and determination; their keen eyes were fixed upon each other with an intensity I never before thought the eye capable of; each seemed fixed immovably upon that of his adversary; yet a fierce vitality beamed in them, motionless as they appeared; while every limb and muscle of their bodies was in the most violent action. No sound arose on the stillness of the scene, except the clash and harsh grating of their swords, as they foiled each other in their cuts and thrusts. While I stood fascinated, gazing upon them, the thinner person—whose side I had taken involuntarily, for I knew neither the individuals nor the cause of quarrel—in parrying a thrust, slipped his foot, and sank to the ground; his antagonist's sword passing through his body in a downward direction. He lay extended at his conqueror's feet, who, quick as thought, seized the hand of his fallen adversary, and detached a ring from one of his fingers. I stood immovable on the heap of stones, with the low wall still between us, watching the issue. He disengaged his sword, and was in the act of plunging it again into the body. 'Villain! villain!' I shouted; it was all I could utter, horrified as I was. He stopped his raised hand, looked round to where I stood, exclaimed, in a voice hoarse from passion—'Scoundrel, you must die!' and, at the same moment, bounded towards me, with the blood-stained sword in his hand. Not a moment was to be lost. Urged by fear, I sprang from the cairn, and fled towards the hill, across the swamp. Fearfully I looked over my shoulder as I neared the wall; he was evidently gaining upon me. Young and fleet as I was, he was far my superior in length of leg and strength; yet my fears did not destroy my presence of mind. I saw that it was only by doubling I could escape; for, if the chase were continued for any length of time, he must run me down like a hare; and the fearful consequence gave me energy. At a bound, I cleared the wall; and, stooping, ran under its shade for some distance before he reached the spot I had leaped. He stood, (for I heard his panting breath,) for a second, before he perceived the direction in which I had run—a circumstance of the utmost service to me. Down he leaped, and followed on my track. I again sprang the wall; and, after running a few yards, I was on the highway, and clear of the park. My hopes now were all placed in meeting some one or other, to claim their protection, or in reaching a house before my pursuer could overtake me. I had not run a hundred yards towards the Abbey Hill, when I saw three men in sailor's dress before me, going towards the city. I called to them to stop, for the rapid step of my enemy was sounding in my ears like the death-knell. They stood still, and looked back; the next moment I was up to them; while he that followed leaped the wall, and disappeared in the direction of the town. We sought not to pursue him, for I had not yet recovered my breath sufficiently to inform

them of what I had been an unconscious witness of. As soon as I told my story, the men resolved to go with me, to ascertain whether the person was dead or required our aid, saying, they were on their way to the Canongate, to meet their captain, by appointment, and having yet sufficient time, they would go by the King's Park, and bear the unfortunate gentleman to town. When we arrived at the spot, we found him seated upon the grass, his head bent forward upon his knee, sick and faint, the blood welling from the wound in his side, which he was making no effort to stanch, and he was plunged in the deepest melancholy. I could hear him sigh heavily, ere we crossed the wall. When the seamen saw him, they uttered a cry of mingled surprise and rage. He raised his head; his face was deadly pale; a faint expression of pleasure passed over it for a moment, then it settled into deep sorrow. He appeared utterly regardless of life; and it was even with gentle violence only, that he allowed them to stanch his wound by binding their silk handkerchiefs round his breast. We found that his ancle was also dreadfully sprained and swelled; and, truly, his agony must have been great from this cause alone; but no complaint or groan escaped from him; and I thought I perceived that his sufferings were far more mental than even bodily. From exhaustion or apathy, he allowed us to do as we pleased; all he commanded being, to be taken to his vessel, and not to the town. So we bore him to a house at Clock Mill, the nearest refuge, while I ran to the Canongate to procure a surgeon, and a conveyance to carry him to Fisherrow. The surgeon I might bring at my own responsibility, for he would not hear of one, wishing evidently to die. The sailors, who recognised me as having been on board the Eliza of London only a few hours before, in quest of a berth, looked upon me now as one of the crew, for the service I had rendered their beloved captain.

After an absence of nearly an hour, I with difficulty procured a post-chaise and a surgeon. The injury was found not to be of much importance, the sword having glanced along the ribs, producing only a severe flesh-wound, which was dressed, and the dislocation reduced. The surgeon insisted upon his staying where he was, for fear of fever, but he was bent upon proceeding to his vessel; so, accompanied by the surgeon, he set off in the chaise, and I, joining my new comrades on foot, proceeded to the vessel along with them. The sensation produced by the wounded state in which the captain had come on board, was in proportion to the love the men bore to their captain. As soon as we were upon the deck, every one on board crowded around us. I gave a true detail of all I had witnessed; every one shook me heartily by the hand, and declared he would be my friend to the end of life; but no one was more warmed to me for the little I had done than the mate. The captain's wound put on a favourable appearance, and he was declared out of danger. In a few days, the wind chopped about to the westward, and we got under way, to complete the voyage, being bound for London. Before we weighed anchor, the captain caused himself to be carried upon deck, where he sat gazing in the direction of Edinburgh until we were out of the Firth; he seemed consumed with some secret grief, and had not opened his mouth to give a single order, the mate alone doing all that was required.

When we had passed the Islands of May and the Bass, and stood into the ocean, he called me to him.

'Square,' said he, 'I have been informed by the mate how much I am indebted to you. The service to me was of small value, in so much as I had rather have perished in the combat, than survived to think that my traitorous rival has triumphed in his villany; but, believe me, young man, my gratitude to you is not the less—you shall in me never want a friend.'

I thanked him kindly for his assurance, and said it would be my endeavour to deserve his friendship. He was soon after removed below, and I did not see him until we reached the Thames, and were moored at the Isle of Dogs. The captain, who was part owner, went into furnished lodgings while we were delivering our cargo, being still unable to walk, from the dislocation of his ankle. The greater part of the crew also lodged on shore; but I remained on board with the mate, in charge of the vessel, and often went to the captain with letters and messages. In one of my visits, he desired me to be seated, and give him an account of myself, as he said he had taken an interest in my welfare, and wished to serve me, agreeably to his promise, if I continued to deserve it. I gave him a full detail of my life until I came to the encounter I had witnessed between him and his opponent, when I stopped. 'Nay, young man,' said he, 'I wish to hear an account of what you were witness of, from your own mouth.' I went on. He heard me with composure, until I mentioned the tearing off the ring from his finger. When I came to this part of the narrative, his countenance became distorted with rage; he ground his teeth, and stamped upon the floor; his eyes flashed fire, and his passion seemed too great for utterance. I looked on in silence, fearful that, from his weakness, he would fall into a fit. At length he said, as if in deep abstraction, and unconscious of my presence—

'Faithless Eliza! I thought I had cast it at thy feet in my agony of blighted hopes, and felt pleased. It was my intention; but my mind was a chaos of misery. The traitor Wallace has got the pledge of the love you proved false to. Would that his sword had pierced the heart his treachery has rendered miserable! No; I shall meet him once again, and one of us shall die'——

Then starting to his feet, he supported himself upon the back of a chair, his countenance no longer distorted with rage, having changed into a settled, resolute cast, calm and stern. His burst of emotion had passed away.

'Square,' he said, 'you, like myself, have no tie to bind you to Scotland, no relation or friend on earth; we are as if we had dropped from some distant planet, now desolate of inhabitants, into this busy world. Still I must ever remember that any happiness I ever enjoyed was in Edinburgh; and my heart's cherished hopes—hopes that have cheered my way through toil and danger—were there for ever crushed by the subtle arts of one I thought my friend. Base wretch! you shall not long exult in your villany! Squares, you must accompany me back to Edinburgh, as soon as I am able to use this limb with vigour. Do you agree to accompany me?'

'With pleasure,' I replied; 'whenever or wherever you go, I go.' My young heart was full of gratitude for the kindness I had received from him; and I felt almost as keenly for his wrongs as if I had been a brother. He saw the workings of my mind in my countenance and, seizing my hand, said—

'Henceforth we shall be as friends.'

The surgeon entered at this period of our discourse, and, to the captain's anxious inquiries, replied, that it would yet be some weeks before his limb would be so strong that he might use it without pain, for any length of time. It was a whole month after this before we left London, during which I had a private tutor to teach me, and restore any little instruction I had got at school, during the life of my parents. I went no longer on board, save to visit the mate, who was now, as master, on the point of sailing; the Eliza being chartered, and her cargo almost on board. He sailed for Rotterdam eight days before we intended to leave London for Edinburgh; which we were to do in a chaise. A voyage to America, in the present day, gives a landsman less concern than a voyage between London and Leith did in those days.

All being arranged, and the captain's ankle pretty stout, we set off for Edinburgh. In our tedious ride over the wretched roads, he was pleased to give me the following account of himself:—He was the second son of a gentleman of decayed fortune in the north of Scotland. He and his elder brother had been sent, young, to an uncle's in Edinburgh, for their education. His brother had chosen his uncle's profession of the law; while he, much against his uncle's wish, had preferred the sea. In his occasional visits to Edinburgh, when opportunity offered, he had met in his uncle's a lovely young lady, the daughter of a gentleman, who was obliged to live in exile, for the share he had had in the rebellion. She was under his uncle's protection, as her father's agent and her guardian. The young sailor's heart was won by the charms of the gentle Eliza; he wooed and won her love. Vows of constancy were exchanged on both sides; but, although fortune had smiled upon him, he was still not rich enough to maintain his beloved in the rank she was by birth entitled to; and it was agreed at their last parting, that, after a few more successful voyages, he should ask her hand in form from his uncle. Changed rings were accordingly the memorials of their plighted faiths. It was Eliza's ring that Wallace had torn from his finger on that eventful evening. Urged by love, he had in his last voyage come far out of his regular course to visit his Eliza; and having anchored in Fisherrow Bay, he flew on the wings of joyous expectation to Edinburgh. On his way he had met an old schoolfellow, who, in answer to his inquiries after his friends, told him, as a part of the news of the day, that his old schoolfellow and rival, Wallace, was on the eve of marriage to Eliza, and that his addresses were sanctioned by his uncle. Maddened by the intelligence, he had hurried to his uncle's, and had the bad fortune to see Wallace taking leave of her as he approached the house; whereupon, in an agony of jealousy and disappointed love, he hastened to overtake him—angry words ensued—Wallace boasted of his triumph, and a challenge was given and received, to meet in the King's Park. Urged on by his disappointed hopes, he waited upon Eliza in a frame of mind bordering upon distraction. Without prelude or explanation, he upbraided her as the most faithless of women, saying, he now thought as lightly of her love as he had ever highly prized it; and, in his fury, thought he had, as he intended, thrown her ring at her feet. At first she had looked alarmed, and wept; surprise held her silent, until all her native pride, and the innate dignity of the female, were roused by his taunts and reproaches, and she ordered him from her presence. They parted in mutual anger. Without seeing his uncle, or any acquaintance in town, he had walked in the most sequestered parts of Arthur's Seat and the Hunting Bog, until the hour of meeting his rival. They met, and the issue has been told.

As we approached the city, he became very dull and uncommunicative, sitting absorbed in his own thoughts for hours; the fierce aspect that his countenance had for a long time worn, was succeeded by a deep shade of sadness. I was young and inexperienced, and knew not how to speak, to divert his mind from the painful feelings that were preying upon him; thus we sat silent for hours, until we reached Musselburgh.—'Squares!' he said, starting up, 'I shall soon have my doubts solved. For this some time, an idea has haunted my mind, which renders me the most miserable of men. What if, in my madness, (I can give it no milder term,) I have wronged Eliza? She was all goodness and truth and I ought to have weighed well before I reproached her. I have striven to think hardly of her, but my heart refuses. Eliza! Eliza! I have lost you for ever; true or false, I can never look on thy face again; but Wallace shall not triumph in my misery. I have preferred bringing you with me to any other person, because of your intimacy with Edinburgh. I do not wish it to be known that I am in town, until I have ascertained, through you, what has occurred since my last unfortunate visit to it. I promised cheerfully to do my utmost to serve him in any duty he required, and, before the evening set in, we were safely lodged in the White Horse tavern at the head of the Canongate. Our first step was to send for one of the cadies—a race of men now extinct; but they were, in their day and generation, a numerous fraternity in Edinburgh, and the source of communication, before the invention of the penny post. The affairs of the inhabitants of all ranks were in general well known to them. Their trust-worthiness was admitted, and they were often employed in preference to domestic servants, in whose gossiping qualities they did not participate. I named Angus M'Dougal in preference to any other, as I had long known him. I brought him. When he entered, the captain sat with his back towards us, wrapped up in his travelling cloak, and avoiding the exposure of his face. After our first greeting, I proceeded to make the necessary inquiries, and found that Mr H—— was in town, and went very little abroad, on account of some distress in his house. The captain gave a start, a stifled groan escaped him, and, to relieve his suspense, I inquired of Angus if he knew the cause—'Oh, the cause is no secret,' replied he; 'his ward, Elizabeth, is not expected to recover frae a dangerous illness. They say it is the effect o' grief, from a strange and hurried occurrence that happened several weeks ago. Miss Eliza had a sweetheart o' the name o' Mr Wallace, wha it was supposed was to hae married her; he was a constant visiter at her uncle's; but there was ane, they say, she liked better, a nephew o' Mr H——'s, wha was lang awa at sea. He appeared suddenly in the house when her guardian was frae hame, and as suddenly left it; nor has he been heard o' since. He was seen in the King's Park by severals, as they think. It's no for me to speak evil o' ony gentleman; but they say that her other sweetheart murdered him, and concealed his body; for next forenoon Mr H—— was sent for express, to come hame to Miss Elizabeth, wha had been out o' ae fit into anither ever since she had seen his nephew. Mr H—— sent everywhere to inquire for the unfortunate young man, but nae tidings could be had. Mr Wallace had left the town suddenly, but nane could tell whar he had gane. They say he was also seen, latish in the afternoon, entering the Duke's Walk to the east. Every part was searched, in vain, for the body, which has never been discovered; but, what has put it beyond a doubt, in the minds of many, that the youth was killed was, that at a sma' distance within the wall near Mushet's Cairn, the grass was observed to be trodden down, and stained wi' blood. This, and the flight o' Wallace, who is said to hae gane owre to Holland to avoid the vengeance o' his uncle, are, at best, very suspicious circumstances. This, Johnny Square, is a' that I ken o' the matter.'

Dismissing the cadie as soon as possible, amply pleased with his reward, I hurried to the captain, who was weeping like an infant, his face buried in his handkerchief. I saw that anything I could say, in his present situation, would be intrusion upon grief, too sacred for interference, and too recent to be soothed. After a few minutes, he turned to me—'Am I not the most guilty of men,' he said, 'and deservedly the most wretched? I have, by my hasty, jealous temper, killed my Eliza, and banished myself from her presence for ever, even should she recover. Oh! how could I, for a moment, harbour such a thought, to the injury of such an angel—far less give utterance to it! Fool, fool, that I have ever been!—it is fitting you die to atone for your jealous madness.' And he beat his forehead with his clenched fists. I became afraid that he intended to do some injury to his person; for there was a fierceness, mingled with agony of mind, in his looks, as he grasped,

as if by some involuntary motion, the hilt of his sword, that alarmed me. I was on the point, different times, of rushing upon and disarming him; but, at length, this paroxysm was succeeded by one of subdued grief, and he became, to all appearance, as feeble as an infant. 'Oh, that I could, by any sacrifice,' he cried, in thrilling tones, 'obtain one glance of my injured Eliza, if it even were my last, to die at her feet, pleading for forgiveness!—her esteem, and with it her love, I know I have forfeited for ever! Rash, rash fool that I was!' Again he relapsed into silence, and, taking advantage of this new turn of thought, I suggested his writing to his uncle. 'Alas, Square,' he said, 'I cannot write; my mind is in a chaos of confusion—my brain is racked almost to madness.'

'Then,' I answered, 'allow me to go, as if I had just arrived in town, and expected to have found you there, and to act as occasion requires. If I find I can, there shall be a messenger sent for you to come to your uncle's, or, at all events, I shall return in as short a time as possible, and give you an account of my success.'

'Square, my friend,' he replied, grasping my hand, 'do with me as you please—my heart is broken—my mind is a tumult of agonizing reflections of what I am, and what I might have been. I blush for the weakness you have witnessed in me; but what man in his folly ever threw from him such a treasure as I have lost, and lost for ever?'

Anxious to alleviate the misery of my benefactor, with hasty steps I proceeded to the Covenant Close, to call upon Mr H——, who lived in the third flat in the Scale Stairs. Almost breathless from the speed I had used, I 'tirled at the pin.' The door was opened by a genteel man-servant in livery, of whom I inquired if Mr H—— was at home, and was answered in the affirmative. I was ushered into an elegant room, where, after waiting a few minutes, a benign but melancholy-looking old gentleman entered:—

'Mr Square, I am informed,' said he, 'you wish to see me: may I inquire, is your business very pressing, as I am rather engaged at present?'

'I humbly beg pardon,' said I; 'I am a stranger to you, and only came to town this afternoon. My acquaintance is with your nephew, Captain H——, of the Eliza: can you inform me when you expect him in town?'

The old man sank into a chair, and remained silent, overcome by his feelings; at length, looking inquiringly into my face—'Alas! sir,' cried he, 'I have now no nephew.'

'Excuse me, sir,' I said, 'if I have wounded your feelings. I am astonished at what you tell me, for I saw him in good health, not many days since, and expected him to have been here to-night.'

Starting to his feet, he came to where I sat, and, placing his hand on my shoulder, looked anxiously in my face—'Young man,' he said, solemnly, 'have you seen Hugh H—— within these five weeks?'

'Certainly,' I replied; 'I saw him in London within these ten days, in good health.

Clasping his hands, and raising his eyes to heaven—'Blessed be God!' he said—'my nephew is alive, and my Eliza may yet be snatched from the grave!'

We now entered into familiar conversation, in which I got from him a similar account to what the cadie had given us, with the addition only of the exertions Mr H—— had made, for the bringing of Wallace to punishment for the murder of his nephew. 'That man,' he concluded, 'has cause to rejoice that he is in life; for so strong was the circumstantial evidence, that, had he been apprehended and brought to trial, there is not a jury who would not have given their verdict Guilty.'

In return, I gave him a detailed account of all that I had witnessed, and the state of misery in which I had left him. Mr H—— heard me with varied feelings as I proceeded, and said he had had no idea of the attachment between Hugh and Eliza, until this unfortunate affair disclosed it to him; and he feared it had proved fatal to his ward, who was in a very dangerous state—her life even despaired of; but he trusted his nephew's return would be more efficacious than all the prescriptions of her physicians; for her's was a sickness of the heart.

With a thrill of pleasure at the success of my call, I bade him adieu, taking with me the assurance that he would break the joyful intelligence to Eliza, and either call at the White Horse Tavern himself, or send a note by his servant, to his 'poor Hughie, who was ever a passionate boy,' to come to him. When I returned, I found him pacing the room with hasty steps.

'Square,' he cried, in a voice bordering on anger, 'is this what I expected from you? You have stayed an age away.'

'I beg pardon, captain, but I have made no unnecessary delay. I bring you tidings of good hope. Your uncle is rejoiced you are safe, and in town; he will either call himself, or send a card for you to-morrow, as he shall judge safest for the sake of Eliza. Meanwhile, he is to break the unexpected news to her.'

Joy and grief, hope and fear, now by turns took possession of his mind, until we retired to rest.

Next forenoon was passed in a state of great anxiety. Captain H—— had spent a sleepless night, and still paced the room in violent emotion, or sank exhausted into his seat. I could not leave him, for the sake of humanity. At length, about two o'clock, Mr H—— came himself to visit his nephew. I cannot describe this meeting; it was painful to all parties. The old man had endeavoured to break the news of Hugh's safety to his ward without success; she was, he confessed, so much reduced, that he feared the agitation might prove fatal; for every allusion to him, since that melancholy occurrence, had produced a series of fainting fits; soon, however, he hoped, with safety, to be enabled to communicate the safety of her Hugh, whom, in her troubled slumbers, he had heard her name, while the large drops glistened on or glided from her long dark eye-lashes.

'O Hugh, Hugh, what have you done?' said the old man, unconsciously, as he wrung his hands—the tears falling over his venerable face.

'Uncle, dear uncle, do not drive me to distraction,' cried the captain; 'I cannot endure the'——

'Pardon me, my boy,' interrupted the uncle; 'I am a silly old bachelor; I know not what I say. Dear Hugh, I didn't mean to grieve you; but who can look on yon suffering innocent creature, and speak but as the feelings dictate?'

The captain groaned aloud, and hid his face in his handkerchief.

Several days were passed in a similar manner before we removed to the Covenant Close; but, alas! Captain H—— had arrived too late. The shock had untwisted the thread of life in the gentle Eliza, and it seemed only to hold together until his arrival. Joy, no doubt, once more visited that broken heart, when she smiled forgiveness upon her heart-stricken lover; but she survived only for three weeks after his arrival, and breathed her last sigh as he bent, almost bereft of reason, over her wasted form.

During this period, I was quite unoccupied, and walked the streets of Edinburgh with a stately gait. How different were my feelings now from what they once had been on the same spot, in former days, when I had run or glided through them, timorous and abject! A child might have taken the wall of me then; now I had a splendid dress, and guineas in my pocket. I walked erect and resolute as a giant, and would give the wall to none; such is the effect of circumstances upon the mind. This, I believe, is the

only time in my life I ever was so foolish. I feared to meet any one who could by any chance have recognised me. Yet in my pride I was still a solitary being, too bashful to make new acquaintances with those I thought my equals, and too proud to associate with those I had known before. Thus did I strut about like a solitary peacock in a farm-yard, with this difference, that I became, unlike that haughty bird, weary of my own consequence.

After the funeral of Eliza, Mr H—— pleaded upon the captain to remain in Edinburgh; but he replied that he could not; all the scenes around only added to his melancholy, by recalling to his mind the lovely object he had lost for ever, and brought up the consciousness of the means—his own cruelty and jealous temper. In a few days we were once more on our way to London, where we arrived in safety, and found the Eliza moored at Rotherhithe. The captain resumed his active duties; and his grief was either more bearable, or, to blunt its edge, he entered more keenly into commerce. I was now appointed second mate. His wish was to obtain a distant freight, unmindful to what part of the world, so that the period of his absence from Britain might be the greatest. Not finding one so readily as he wished, he took a rich cargo on board upon his own account, fitted for the Indian market, and we left the Thames in November 1751.

For several years from this date, I was as happy as any human being could be, for we sailed the Indian ocean from point to point in all directions, encountering various turns of fortune, but still progressing towards wealth. I was myself rich, far beyond what I could ever have hoped to have been; and as for Captain H——, he had accumulated a fortune with which he was satisfied; his equanimity of mind was in some measure restored; he could talk at times of Eliza with a pleasing melancholy, and spoke of returning once more to Europe. As his vessel, the Eliza, was now old, and not safe for a home voyage, he resolved to sell her in the country, and return to Europe a passenger in the first commodious trader. This he actually did at Bombay, giving to each of his crew who had left England with him a handsome present, and the amount in cash of their passage money home, that they might either return at his expense, or stay longer in the country, where there were great inducements, if they chose. Me, as my sincere friend, he strongly advised to remain for a few years longer, when I might return an independent man to Edinburgh.

This was one of the golden opportunities every man has once in his power, during his existence, of bettering his circumstances for life. My evil destiny, or some other cause, made me reject it. I had, for several months back, as I had had several times before, a strong longing to visit Scotland once more. It is hardly possible for those who have never been for years absent from their native home, to imagine how overpowering this home sickness is, and how little will furnish to a languishing mind a plausible excuse for a return. I felt a conviction that I was not acting in the best manner for my own interest; yet I soothed down this feeling by the hope that I could return at any time, and pursue my fortune. To Captain H——, I stated my wish to return to Europe at all events, as I was weary of the Indian clime, and that, as I had left Edinburgh with him, I would, if he had no objection, return in the same vessel; he agreed—and thus we were again fated to go together.

After remaining on shore inactive for some weeks, we embarked on board the Traussean, bound for Amsterdam. Would that I had been of the same turn of mind and resolution as Mr Yates our chief mate, who remained in the country, and soon sailed a vessel of his own! I saw him several years afterwards in London, living in wealth and independence, the produce of his toils in India. I gratified my wish at all hazards—he obeyed his better judgment; he had his reward—I had mine.

From Bombay to the Cape of Good Hope we had a quick and pleasant run. We stopped at the Cape for three weeks, and took in refreshments and some passengers, amongst whom was an old, rich planter on his return to Holland taking with him a black boy, his slave, one of the merriest and most obliging creatures I ever saw. The little fellow soon became the favourite of every one on board. Pontoben was the joy of every one, except his master, who was ever correcting or finding fault with him. In one of my sallies, I called the old planter Satan. He was worthy of the title, and it adhered to him like a burdockhead. A more forebiding figure I have never seen. Tall and bony, he had the appearance of a gigantic skeleton covered with shrivelled brown leather; his forehead, large, and deeply furrowed, rose over two shaggy eyebrows, that overshadowed eyes of light blue, keen and restless. There was a peculiar expression in his whole face that made even the most daring feel uneasy on beholding him; and, unless they were excited at the time by hatred towards him, few ever dared his eye. I myself felt that no inducement could ever make me look upon him as a kindred being; and, indeed, he rarely spoke to any of his countrymen. His harsh, sepulchral tones were seldom heard but in execrations of poor Pontoben, who would leave his master with the big drops of anguish, from punishment, rolling down his ebony face; and, in a few minutes after, be seen laughing and sporting with the seamen.

On the evening of the seventh day after we had left Table Bay, the sun set like an immense globe of deep red fire, and the sky began to be overcast. The vessel was made all tight for the expected storm; and come it did, soon after dark, with fearful force. All I had ever encountered could not be compared to its violence. The vessel pitched, groaned, and quivered, during the whole night, as if she would have gone to pieces; and, when day at length came, with no abatement of the storm, it only served to shew us the extent of our danger. The sky was dark and lowering; heavy masses of clouds obscured the sun, and poured forth deluges of rain; the vessel laboured so much, and the wind was so strong, that no man on board could keep his feet, and the crew were lashed to different parts of the vessel, to prevent their being washed from the decks by the waves, which were every now and then making a complete breach over us. The Captain and I shared the fatigues of the crew as we shared their danger. Another night of darkness and tempest, if possible more severe than the first, passed over our heads; still the vessel held good, and we hoped to weather the gale; when, just about an hour after daybreak, the wind chopped about nearly two points off the compass; the man at the helm, either through fatigue or mismanagement, allowed a tremendous sea to strike her too much forward, when she heeled so far over that a second wave laid her upon her beam ends. A cry of despair rose, in one long, wailing sound, from every one on board; three of the crew were hurled into the mountainous ocean, and perished in a moment. The vessel had been making a considerable quantity of water, but not sufficient to cause alarm on that account; but now it was finding its way in by the companions from every wave that rolled over us. It is in moments such as these that the character of the seaman shines forth in all its lustre. For a few minutes, and no more, we were paralyzed, and looked on in stupor, expecting to go down to the deep; still she floated—the larboard side only a few inches out of the water; the wind had perceptibly declined, still the sea ran as high as ever; and thus, for several hours, we clung to fastenings, in expectation of her going down every instant. We had it not in our power to do anything for our safety; it seemed as if her cargo had

shifted in the hold, and the first heavy sea would finish all. I cannot say how long this lasted; the rage of the tempest at length died away, and it became possible for us to act. Her fore and mizzenmasts were cut away, when she righted considerably; and then we commenced to throw what of her cargo we could get at overboard, altering the remainder until she righted. When hope once more dawned upon us, exhausted by hunger and fatigue, we stretched our weary limbs upon the deck, and sank to rest—the captain of the vessel taking the helm, and keeping watch with a few of his exhausted crew, who were soon relieved by short watches, until their strength was restored.

Jurymasts were now erected, and we hoped to reach the coast of Portugal, and refit; but our misfortunes had only commenced, for we found that our bread had been completely destroyed by the water we had made during the storm; and, besides, we were not provisioned for a very protracted voyage. It was at once agreed that both passengers and crew should go on short allowance; and, as our vessel was both leaky and sailed badly under her jurymasts, our prospects were now gloomy enough. Satan had never left his berth since the coming on of the storm; but lay and blasphemed, and beat poor Pontoben as usual, his temper having evidently become worse under his privations, though he had many preserves and luxuries of his own private property. The captain and myself kept up our spirits, in the expectation of falling in with some vessel bound for Europe, in which case we would leave the Traussean; but we were not so fortunate; for scarce were we refitted from the wrecks of the hurricane, when we were becalmed for three weeks. I shall not attempt to describe this our melancholy situation on the bosom of the ocean, that lay all around as still as death; its glassy brightness dazzling the eye under the intense rays of the sun, and our scanty supply of provisions rapidly wearing done. A lingering death from famine seemed inevitable; despair began to steal upon us; anxiety and fear were visible in the countenances of all. The pious became more fervent in their devotions, and the profane more choice in their expressions. All of us moved about the vessel like spectres, seldom exchanging words, every one seemingly absorbed in his own reflections. Vain was the attempt to call up a cheerful thought. If a laugh was heard, which some would attempt, it looked more like madness than mirth, and grated upon the ear like some unearthly sound; while tales of fearful import and sad forebodings alone could gain the attention of the listeners.

This state of the ocean at length changed; a faint breeze sprang up; but, alas! it was unsteady and baffling, and our crippled vessel was ill adapted for any but a leading wind. By observation, we were nearly equidistant from the coast of Portugal and the Cape; otherwise, to save our lives, we would have run the wreck of the Traussean back to Table Bay. This plan was even urged by severals of the crew; but overruled by the captain and majority; for the reason, that we could not depend upon the wind lasting long enough to carry us there, and we had more chance to fall in with some vessel as we neared Europe. Scarcely able to stand to the pumps, for she needed clearing every twelve hours, we persevered in our course, the provisions being doled out in the smallest portions that could sustain nature, and diminished till we resembled skeletons more than men. When we commenced the voyage, there were a great many monkeys, parrots, and other birds, intended as gifts to friends in Europe. These had long since been consumed by their owners; even the vermin we were so fortunate as to catch were indeed a luxury; and every invention was put in practice to ensnare them. The preserves and private stock, everything that could sustain life, had been taken from Satan and the other passengers, and placed in the common stock; so that no one might fare better than his fellow. We had for some time looked at each other with an evil eye, and to wish for a death, that we might avoid the necessity of casting lots; for, strange to say, we clung to life the more tenaciously the more our sufferings increased. I have often since been amazed to think that, for trivial sufferings or wounded pride, men will voluntarily commit suicide; and yet, among twenty-five individuals, to any of whom a natural death would have been a kind relief, this fearful remedy was never thought of. With the keenest scrutiny we counted the ship's crew and passengers every morning, in hopes that some one had died in the night. One morning Pontoben, who had, even amidst the ill-usage he received from his master, stood it out better than any on board, was amissing, and a search was made for him through the ship in vain. At length he was found in his master's berth, beyond him, dead—the marks of strangulation upon his throat, evidence to us all that Satan had strangled him through the night. The body was at once demanded; but his master, with execrations, refused to deliver it up, as he maintained the boy was his own property, and he would 'keep it for his own use.' My blood ran cold as I looked upon the murdered boy and his savage master. The lifeless corpse was torn from him, and mangled, to be consumed; but neither Captain H—— nor myself could look upon the horrid mess, and several others were similarly affected; but Satan gloated over it, and cursed the others for depriving him of the whole.

Our sufferings had now reached the limit of human endurance. We were unable to stand at the pumps even half-hour spells; and if we ceased to lighten the vessel we must soon founder. In this our last extremity, it was at last agreed to cast the fatal lot, to ascertain who was to die to save the rest. We could sustain the gnawing of hunger no longer. Every article of leather, even our shoes, had been consumed. We were all assembled upon the quarter-deck, to bide our fate. Sunk and dispirited as we were by famine, we all clung to life with a more intense desire than we had ever done in more prosperous times. The arrangements were thus made. A large china jar was placed upon the binnacle, into which was put a scroll of paper for each person on board, cut and folded exactly alike. On one was wrote—'Gracious God, pardon my sins, and receive my soul, for Jesus' sake.' On the other—'Merciful God, require not this innocent blood at my hands.' He that drew the first was to die; and he that drew the second was to be the executioner. All the other papers were blank. Everything was prepared before us in the most equitable manner. A period of thrilling suspense intervened, and all being ready, the captain walked first, placed his hand in the jar, and drew a lot. In like manner every one on board followed him, each holding his doom in his hand unopened until all was drawn. Another fearful pause ensued. Each feared to unroll his paper. Good God! the fatal scroll was in my hand; and Satan was to be my butcher!

I yet shudder when I call to mind the agony of that moment. All eyes beamed joy, I thought, that they had escaped. I was, for a moment, stupified. Then my brain seemed to whirl round—the light forsook my eyes—I became incapable of reflection; yet a nervous, convulsive energy made me plead for mercy—a mere instinctive effort, for had I been able to command my thoughts, they would have satisfied me that there was no hope. Satan stood by my side with the knife in his hand ready for his victim; even yet, when my slumbers are uneasy, I see his tall, hideous figure, rendered, at the time, doubly frightful by famine, standing over me, his knife at my throat, and Captain H—— in vain endeavouring to hold his hand. My agony and pleadings so melted the whole sufferers, that it was resolved to delay my death until the shades of

night had once more covered the ocean, in hopes some ship might heave in sight before my fate was sealed; if not, the morning never was to dawn for me—that day was to be my last in time. Captain H—— kneeled, weeping, by my side. He was joined by all the crew, except the Satanic planter, in heartfelt devotion, and earnest supplication for my deliverance. Alas! I could not mould my own thoughts to prayer; a thousand wandering fancies crowded through my mind, making all dark chaos, save the lurid coruscations of the horrors of dissolution. Their prayers and supplications sounded in my ears as if they were the noise of broken water on a reef of rocks, in a gentle breeze; and if I mechanically joined, or kept imploring pardon and mercy through Jesus for my many sins, it was not prayer, for I felt neither peace nor hope while I called. My heart seemed to take little interest in what my lips were uttering. All appeared as if I had been suddenly thrown to the bottom of a mine in utter darkness. Then, again, the glowing sun, that the day before seemed stationary in the heavens, so slow had appeared his progress, now seemed to whirl with fearful velocity, as I occasionally cast up my despairing eyes to mark his progress.

It was now past noon. Captain H—— still sat by my side, with my hand clasped affectionately in his, doing his utmost to prepare my soul for the great change. I began slowly to recover from the stupor caused by the sudden announcement of my horrid doom. I joined in prayer with him. Never again will I be more fit to die than I became towards the evening. I told the captain of the vessel I was now ready to submit to my lot. He could not answer me, his heart was too full; the tears rolled down his rugged face, and, with a groan, he retired to his cabin. Satan, who had eyed me from the first as if he repined at the delay I had obtained, came forward. The men turned their backs. Captain H—— rose to his feet and pushed him back, saying I had been allowed to live until sun-down, and I should have full time allowed. Some of the crew joined him. As for myself I had become weary of my horrible suspense.

As had been the daily practice since our misfortunes began, several of the crew had been stationed in our remaining mast-head, to look out for any vessel that might come in sight; even yet several continued to crawl up, to gaze over the expanse of waters, in hopes of relief. Often through this day had my imploring eyes been fixed on them with anxious looks. Even while I felt weary of my suspense and wished it over, hope would steal over my mind; there was yet some space e'er sunset, and my prayers for pardon, spite of myself, would end in supplications for deliverance. Suddenly a faint shout arose from the mast head. It was repeated. I started up, and involuntary joined, as it ran along the deck, the blessed cry, 'A sail in sight!' There was life in the sound. Many wept, while others laughed aloud. Some clasped their hands in silence, and raised their eyes to heaven. I sank upon my knees; tears of gratitude to God poured from my eyes; words were denied me; but my heart burned within me with love. I arose and joined the crew, who were gazing over the side at the welcome sight which was nearing us fast. We fired a gun and hung out a signal of distress, as the sun was now fast sinking in the west. She still neared us; but darkness was coming fast, and, fearing to lose her, a lanthorn was fixed on the top, and minute guns were fired. The strange vessel occasionally replied; and, during this last night of our misery no eye was closed. Each flash of her gun, less distant as she replied, acted upon our depressed minds, inspiring hope. Faint as the wind was, it was evident that she neared us, and we steered our almost water-logged hulk towards the flash of her guns, in the best manner we could. When morning dawned, she was within a quarter ot a league of us. We now made her out to be a Portuguese merchantman; but had she been an Algerine cruiser, we would have hailed her with delight. A boat put off from her, and was soon alongside. The officer who came on board, was shocked to witness our misery; for, indeed, we resembled spectres more than men. She proved to be a Portuguese trader of the largest class, bound for Brazil, laden with supplies. Captain H——, who was acquainted with the captain, and spoke a little Portuguese, having been several times in Lisbon, acted as interpreter. Language was not required to tell our miserable state. The Portuguese acted with the utmost humanity, and stayed by us for two days. The captain himself came on board with the first boat load of supplies, and superintended their serving out—as great an act of humanity as furnishing them; for the people on board the Traussean, now that provisions were on board, became actually mutinous to obtain them—each man thinking he alone could have eat the whole supply, so ravenous did our appetites feel. We were, at first, only served with half a biscuit each, steeped in wine. Impatient as we were for this and much more, as soon as it was given by our benefactors, numbers loathed it and could not swallow the morsel. I thought, upon receiving my portion, it was cruel mockery of our wants to give so little. My desires were all for food, food; yet, when I put the first bit into my mouth, a sickness came over me—my stomach refused to receive it. Thus I sat with what my soul longed for in my hand, yet unable to enjoy it, conscious that my existence depended upon it; yet it was by several violent efforts I succeeded in swallowing it. Soon after, I fell sound asleep. All were not affected in the same manner. Some devoured their allowance and pleaded for more, which was, for a space, refused, until it was thought safe to gratify the calls of hunger with more solid food. In about four hours I awoke from my sleep, with the most intense craving for food, much more so than I had felt during the famine. Captain H—— I found still asleep in his berth, to which he had retired. Ten of the crew of the Portuguese vessel were at our pumps and in charge of the vessel; for our own crew were incapable of any exertion. All energy seemed to have forsaken us, now that help had been so mercifully bestowed upon us. Gradually the allowance of food was increased to us, and next morning our vigour began gradually to return. Fortunately the weather was very fine. Our deliverers lay close to us during the night; their boats had been passing between the vessels with all they could spare to supply our wants, and their own men cheerfully undertook the task we ourselves were incapable of. Having done all for us they could, even assisting to refit and search for the leak, on the evening of the second day they bade us farewell, and proceeded on their voyage, amply rewarded for their kindness. The Portuguese captain made, at parting, a present to Captain H—— of six bottles of wine and some other necessaries; for he was now confined to his berth, the privations he had so long endured having made him very feverish and unwell.

On the third day after we parted from the generous Portuguese, we reached the mouth of the Tagus, when the pilot came on board. He had almost left the vessel again, so great was his alarm and surprise at our wretched appearance. We resembled a spectre ship. The Traussean was refitted, and ready to sail; but we resolved not to proceed farther in her. We could as readily get a passage from Lisbon to Britain as from Amsterdam; and what would have induced me to leave her more than what I had suffered in her was the presence of the hated Satan. A feeling of horror crept over me every time I saw him, after that fearful day during which I was doomed to death. His malign eyes were never off me, as he sat like a rattlesnake

fascinating a poor squirrel or bird. I did not fear him; it was loathing that made me recoil from him. I could have encountered him in single combat with a feeling of satisfaction; but he gave me or no one a just ground of quarrel, and it was not my nature to fix one on him.

Having settled with the captain of the Dutch vessel, and removed our luggage to the hotel, we remained several weeks, during which Captain H—— rapidly recovered. To amuse ourselves, we visited the English resident in the town; but our chief resort was to the house of Mr B——, a Scottish merchant, who had a family of two sons and a daughter—the young lady a most engaging girl, and very beautiful. Captain R—— used to spend the most of his time in this family; and, gradually, I could observe a change in his manner and conversation. He became more gay and cheerful in his manner, at times; then, again, he would resume all the melancholy he felt at our first acquaintance. I was, for some time, at a loss to imagine what caused this change of temper in him. One day, as we sat at breakfast talking over old adventures, he said—

'Square, I have observed that you have been rather surprised at my manner of late. In truth, I do not wonder at it. I am not less surprised at it myself. That bewitching girl, Helen, has made a fool of me, I believe. The truth is, I love her to distraction, and fear to acknowledge it to myself; yet truth will out.'

Then, leaning his head upon his hand, he sighed heavily, 'Poor Eliza!' I made no reply for a few minutes, as I was taken by surprise, and knew not what to say. I was, involuntarily on my part, made his confidant. He told me that he had not as yet declared his passion to Helen, and feared to do so, lest he should be rejected by her, as there was a young Portuguese noble very marked in his attentions. Jocularly, I began to laugh him out of his fears, and urged a bold attempt to win her, if she was his choice, now that he was rich enough to forego all toil and care; for Bachelor Hall was but a lonely dwelling. Before noon, we parted—he to declare his unalterable love—I to make some calls upon a few Scotch friends I had picked up. The day passed on cheerfully. I was returning to our hotel as the shades of evening began to fall—having an appointment with Captain H—— to attend a party in the evening. I was posting quickly along, when, at the church of St Geremino, a little distance from our hotel, I saw a crowd collect suddenly. My way led through the narrow thoroughfare. I passed on, resolved not to stop, when the words "Assassinated, poor gentleman!" fell upon my ear. Urged by curiosity and humanity, I bustled through the crowd. In the centre lay the captain, weltering in his blood. In a moment, he was supported in my arms. Opening his eyes, he recognised me, and said—

'Squares, I have been cowardly murdered by some villain.'

Urging silence upon him, I had him immediately conveyed home to our hotel, and the surgeon sent for to examine his wound. To my great joy, it proved not fatal, but dangerous. The poniard had taken, fortunately, an upward direction—entering the left breast, and passing outwards to the top of the shoulder. For several days, he lay dangerously ill. In such a city as Lisbon, it was of no use to offer a reward or make inquiries after the assassin, even had death ensued. Mr B—— and his sons called regularly upon him every day, to inquire after him and visit his sick bed. After he was able to sit up, Helen, attended by her brothers, waited upon him. I was present at their interview. The captain, on the day of which I have spoken before, had called upon Helen, resolved to know her sentiments of him, and either declare his love or to banish her from his mind. The Portuguese noble was also present when he called. Helen's preference had been too apparent; yet no opportunity offered for him to declare his passion His rival watched with jealous care, and seemed determined to wait him out; yet no animosity appeared in his manner; all was, to appearance, joy and mirth. The captain bade Helen adieu, to keep his appointment at the British Consul's; Helen gave him her hand to kiss; an interchange of looks had fired the Portuguese to madness; quickly he had followed; and, as he thought, slain his hated rival. All this had been discovered shortly after the event. But to return.

When Helen and her brothers entered, the captain lay upon his couch, propped up with pillows. She approached, pale, and evidently overcome by emotion; joy beamed in the captain's eye; he stretched forth his hand to welcome her, and she was in the act of presenting hers, when the captain's hand sank, and he fell back upon the pillows, pale and overcome. His eye was fixed upon her hand, which had sunk by her side. We looked on in astonishment. In a few minutes, the captain recovered, and was the first to speak—

'Excuse this burst of feeling I cannot control; this moment has recalled to memory the most miserable event of my life. Lady, that ring?' pointing to her hand with a melancholy smile,

'I got it from my poor cousin at her death,' said she.

'Thank God!' the captain ejaculated. 'It was once mine; the gift of one I loved dearer than life—my dear Eliza, now no more.'

While he said this, the brothers looked upon each other astonished, while Helen hung her head, and turned deadly pale. The whole party were much embarrassed, until the captain gave them an account of his first love, and its fatal issue. During the recital, I could see the tears swim in Helen's eyes. She took the ring from her finger, and presented it to the captain, who kissed it with fervour, and placed it upon his bosom for a moment, saying—

'Dearest Helen, will you be to me all that Eliza was, and allow me to keep this as a token of your promise, until I am thought by you and your relations worthy of you?' Helen blushed and made no reply; but her eyes were eloquent. Her brothers said they felt themselves honoured, and would consult their father. All were now happy. The elder brother told us the history of the ring, as far as he knew, as follows:—

Their cousin Katherine, a young lady of great expectation and good fortune, had been betrothed to a Scotchman in Holland, where she resided with her mother, a widowed sister of their father's; before their marriage, her lover, who had fallen in a duel on the frontiers of France, had given her the ring. After his premature death, she had fallen into a bad state of health, and come to Lisbon to reside, where she breathed her last in the arms of Helen bequeathing her the ring and other jewels of value.

Captain H—— now removed to the house of Mr B——, his acknowledged father-in-law to be. I remained no longer in Lisbon than a few weeks after the ceremony, when I bade adieu to Captain H—— and his bride, and embarked on board the Emelie for London, many pounds the poorer for my stay in Lisbon; yet rich: I was possessed of several hundred pounds; my mind was more harassed how to lay them out to advantage than it had been to earn them. In truth, I was so unstable in my resolves, I sometimes wished I was once again as poor as I was when I left Edinburgh first with Captain H——."

WILSON'S

Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND.

PHEBE FORTUNE.

I HAVE now been upwards of forty years minister of the parish of C——. Soon after I became minister, I stumbled one morning upon a small parcel lying in a turnip field adjoining the manse. It appeared to me at first to be a large hedgehog; but, upon further investigation, I found that it was a seemingly new-born infant, wrapt carefully up in warm flannel, and dressed in clothes which indicated anything but extreme poverty. There was a kirk-road through the turnip field—my wonted passage to my glebe land every morning; and the infant had manifestly been deposited with a reference to my habits. I could not possibly miss seeing it—it lay completely across my path—a road almost untrod by anybody save myself.

As I happened to have a young, and a pretty large—or, in other phrase, *small*—family of my own, I hesitated at first how to proceed; but a moment's reflection taught me the necessity of acting rather than of thinking; and I gathered up the little innocent in my arms, and hastened back, with all possible speed, to the manse. The little hands of the helpless existence were moving backwards and forwards, up and down; and its lips plainly indicated a desire for its natural beverage.

"Bless me!" said my dear wife, as I entered; "bless me, my dear, what's that you are bringing us?"

"It's a child," said I; "an infant—beautiful as day—only look at it."

"None of your nonsense," said spousie, looking somewhat archly in my face. "I'm sure, ye ken, we hae mae weans than we hae meat for already. But where in all the world did you pick up this sweet little darling?"—for, by this time, my wife had opened the flannel coverings, and examined the features of the young stranger carefully.

My second youngest girl, about four years of age, had joined us, and, falling down on her knees, kissed the foundling's cheeks all over. In fact, the news spread all over the manse in less than no time; and I had my two eldest boys—then preparing for school—my eldest daughter, and the two maid-servants, all tumbling into the parlour in a world of amazement. My wife, however, having recovered from her first surprise, and burst of natural affection, began, very naturally, to speculate about the parentage of this uninvited visitant. She examined its dress; and, amongst other discoveries, found a piece of paper attached to the body of the frock, inscribed with these words, in a plain printed hand—"I am not what I seem. My name is *Phebe*." On searching a little more particularly, a hundred-pound note was found stitched into a small purse or bag, suspended from the infant's neck. We were all amazement. My wife was all at once persuaded that the infant must be the offspring of some lady of high quality, and that, by keeping her in our family, we should be absolutely enriched by presents of hundred-pound notes every other morning. She seemed to look upon poor Phebe as the philosopher's stone, and thought that gold would, in future, be as plentiful in our house, as brass coinage had hitherto been. But who could be the mother of this pretty, sweet, dear, darling, lovely child? Could it be—and she whispered me knowingly in the ear; but I shook my head, and looked equally knowing. Could it be Lady M——? I looked incredulity, and my wife pushed her speculations no further. By this time my oldest daughter had arranged Phebe's dress, and made all snug; and the poor little infant gave audible intimation of a desire for food. What was to be done? This question occupied us for about a quarter of an hour, when we at last recollected that Lord C——'s gardener's wife had yesterday buried her infant. She was immediately sent for, and, having no children of her own, agreed, after some persuasion, and the promise of a handsome reward, to suckle poor Phebe. It was, indeed, beautifully interesting to observe how Phebe's little hands wandered over the source of her sustenance, and seemed to say, as plainly as hands could speak it, "I have you now, and will not part with you again." Phebe grew—opened her sweet blue eyes—smiled—and won all hearts in the course of a month. But she was still a heathen, or, in other words, unbaptized; and, after consulting the session, whom I advertised of all the circumstances, it was agreed that the gardener's wife should take the vows, and name the child. We all wept at the christening; there was something so unusual and overpowering, so mysterious and exciting, in the whole transaction. My wife suggested that she should be called "Phebe Monday," that being the day on which she was found; but, somehow or other, I disliked the combination of sounds exceedingly; and at last, at the suggestion of the nurse-mother, we affixed Fortune to her Christain designation; and, after the ceremony, which was performed in the gardener's house, we drank a glass of ginger wine to the health and long life of little Phebe Fortune, the foundling. Through the kindness of Lord C——, I had the privilege of walking when I chose in his extensive gardens and pleasure-grounds, which were in my parish, and adjoining to the manse; and it was on one of the smooth-rolled grass walks of this garden that I conducted little Phebe's first steps, when she put down her little foot for the first time, and stood almost erect on the grass. Oh, how the little doll screamed and chuckled as she tumbled over and rolled about; ever and anon stretching out her little hand, and asking, as it were, my assistance in aiding her inexperience and weakness. However, "*Tentando fimus fabri*," by effort frequently repeated success is at last secured; and Phebe at last flew off from me like an arrow, and, like an arrow too, alighted head foremost on the soft sward. Phebe won all hearts when she began to syllable people's names. Me she called "minny-man;" my wife, "minny-man-minny;" and her own nurse, "mother, ma, ma, bonny ma! guid ma!" Year rolled on after year, and little Phebe was the talk of all the country round. People passing on the highroad stopped and spoke to her. Phebe used often to visit the manse, and to play with my youngest daughter only a few months younger than herself, whilst I have often sat in my elbow chair, called in the family "Snug," and said to myself, "I am sure I cannot tell which of these children I am most attached to." All the features and properties of little Phebe were aristocratic: beautiful feet and ankles; small, little plump hands, and finely tapered fingers; an eye of the purest water and the most noble ex-

pression, beaming through a curtain of deep blue, under a canopy of the finest auburn; a brow, nose, lips, and chin, all exquisitely formed and proportioned. No child in the neighbourhood could be compared with Phebe. Even my wife, prejudiced as she naturally was in favour of her own offspring, used sometimes to say—"Our Jessie looks well enough; but that child Phebe is a pear of another tree." To this I readily assented, as I had no inclination to hint even the identity of the tree, or the affinity of the fruit.

One day I was walking with little Phebe (who had now attained her seventh year, and exhausted the last penny of the hundred pounds) in my own little garden—we were quite alone, when the girl all at once stopped her playfulness, (for she was now a very lark,) and, taking a hold of my hand, pulled me gently, nothing loath, into an adjoining little arbour; after I was seated, and Phebe had taken her wonted station betwixt my knees, reserving either knee for future convenience, the little angel looked up in my face so innocently and so sweetly, saying—

"You are Jessie's pa, are not you?"

"Yes," I replied, "my dear child, I am."

"But where is my pa? have I no pa? Gardener says you know all about it."

I regretted exceedingly that anything should have passed betwixt the foster-parents and their charge, upon the subject; but, since it was so, I judged it best at once to tell the child the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Phebe looked me most intently in the face as I proceeded, and, when I had finished by kissing her, and assuring her that, whilst I lived, she should never want a pa, the poor dear burst into tears, exclaiming, in an accent of complete misery—

"No pa! no ma! Everybody has pa's and ma's but Phebe. Dear, dear minny"—a term by which she still addressed me—"can you not tell me anything about my own ma?"

I assured her that I could not, having not the least information on the subject.

"Maybe she's dead"—and here again her feelings overcame her, and she laid her head on my knee, with all its luxuriant tresses; and I felt the tears warm on my person.

From this day Phebe Fortune became a different child. Even at an early age she had learned to think; but had been hitherto very averse to learning, or school education. She was henceforth diligent and attentive, making rapid progress in reading, writing, and accounts. Her foster-mother taught her sewing; and little Phebe, by the time she was eleven years old, was quite accomplished in all the necessary and useful parts of a female education. But, alas! the instability of human affairs!—poor Phebe caught a fever, which she communicated to her foster-mother, and which occasioned *her* death in a few weeks, whilst Phebe slowly recovered. The gardener's heart was broken—he had long been subject to occasional fits of low spirits. Whether from accident or not was never fully ascertained, nor even closely investigated; but he was found one morning drowned, in a pond of water which ornamented the east corner of the garden ground. As my own family was numerous, and my stipend limited, I behoved to endeavour to place Phebe in some way of doing for herself—still hoping, however, that time ere long would withdraw the veil, and discover the sunny side of Phebe Fortune's history. Seldom did a carriage pass the manse by the king's highway, that my wife did not conjecture that it might perhaps stop at the bottom of the avenue, and emit a fine lady, with fine manners and a genteel tongue, to claim our now highly interesting ward. But the perverse carriages persevered in rolling rapidly along, till, at last, one fine sunny afternoon, one did actually stop, and out stepped the lady, middle-aged, splendidly attired, and advanced towards our habitation. My wife's heart was at her mouth—she ran through the house in a few seconds, from bottom to top, had Phebe put into her best attire, and all diligence served upon the dusting and cleaning of carpets and chairs. The lady appeared; but, to my wife's great disappointment, proved to be no other than an old pupil of my own, who, in passing, had heard of my residence, and wished kindly to renew an acquaintance, interrupted by, perhaps, not less than thirty years. Still my wife would not give up the notion that Phebe resembled Lady D—— exceedingly, and that Lady D—— seemed to eye her with more complacency than any of the rest of the children. In the course of conversation, I had occasion to acknowledge that the beautiful being whom Lady D—— admired above all the rest of my fine family, was a foundling. This led to a detail of the whole matter; and Lady D——, having conversed for a little with Phebe, took such a liking to the girl, that she proposed having her continually about her person, as a kind of superior waiting-maid, half menial and half companion, and to remove her from under our roof on the instant. Although this was an offer too good and too opportune to be negatived, yet we could not think of parting with our darling Phebe on so short a warning; and, after some remonstrances on both sides, it was agreed that the carriage should be sent for Phebe and me on a future day, which was named, and that I should spend a few days with my old pupil, in her recently acquired and lately inhabited mansion-house of Rosehall, little more than thirty miles distant. The interval which took place betwixt this proposal and its accomplishment, was spent in needlework, and other little feminine preparations; and, as the day approached, we all felt as if we could have wished that we had rejected the proposal with disdain. Phebe was often seen in tears—but she was all resignation, and rejoiced that I was to accompany her, and see her fairly entered. At last the dreadful carriage, with its four horses, came into view, at the foot of our avenue, (which, though possessed of a sufficiently imposing appellation, was nothing more nor less than a very bad and nearly impassable cart road,) and we all began our march to meet the vehicle. Promises of future visits were spoken of, and made, and solemnly sworn to—a home, house, our manse was declared to Phebe at all times; but, particularly, should she find herself unhappy in her new position; and it was with difficulty that I got the now truly lovely, and all but woman, Phebe, torn from the grasp and cling of my daughters, and handed into the splendid and richly lined chariot.

In the family of Lady D——, Phebe's duties were at once easy and agreeable. She waited upon her mistress's bell in the morning, and was soon taught how to assist at the toilet. During the day, she either read aloud, whilst her Ladyship reposed after her forenoon's walk or drive, or looked after the health and comfort of two favourite lap-dogs. At night, again, she renewed her closet assistance, reading aloud some paragraph which she had marked in a newspaper, and detailing such little domestic incidents as came within the range of her somewhat limited sphere of observation. Lord D—— was much engaged in public business (being lord-lieutenant of the county,) and in carrying on some agricultural speculations by which he was much engrossed. There were two young Honourables of the fair sex, and an only son—then attending his studies at Oxford—children of the family. Phebe Fortune was now fifteen, and seemed to increase in loveliness, and the most kindly, intelligent expression of countenance, daily. Her eyes were heaven's own *blue*—

> "The little halcyon's azure plume
> Was never half so blue."

And then, when she spoke or smiled, her countenance was altogether overpowering—as well might you have attempted to look steadfastly upon the sun in his midday radiance.

Of *her* far more truly and forcibly might it have been said or sung, than of the "Lassie wi' the Lint-white Locks"—

"She talked, she smiled, my heart she wiled,
She charmed my soul, I wat na hoo;
But aye the stound, the deadly wound,
Cam frae her een sae bonny blue."

Phebe, by my own arrangement with Lady D——, was not exposed to any intimacy with the servants, male or female. She had her own apartment and table; and all the menial duties were performed to her as regularly as to any branch of the family. It was soon after my return from a three weeks' visit at Rosehall, that I received the following letter from Phebe. I got it at the post-office, unknown to any of my family; and I kept it, as was my custom when I had anything agreeable to communicate, till after dinner. The board having been cleared, and a tumbler of warm toddy made, my wife's single glass having been filled out, and my daughters having turned them all ear, I proceeded to read the following maiden epistle of Phebe Fortune:—

"Dear, dear Papa, and ever dear Mamma, and all my own Sisters dear,—I am happy here; Lady D—— is so kind to me; and Lord D—— looks very kind too, though he has not spoken to me yet—but then you see he is always engaged; and the Honourable young ladies—but I do not think they are quite so kind; and they are so pretty too, and so happy looking! Oh, I wish they would like me! If they would only speak to me now and then as they pass me on the stair; but they only stop and laugh to one another, and then they toss their heads; and I can hear them say something about 'upsetting,' and 'mamma's whim, and papa's absurdity.' I'm sure—I'm sure, my dear parents—(for, alas! I have none other, though I dream sometimes that I have, and I feel so happy and delighted that I always awake crying)—but what was I going to say?—you know I never wrote any letters before, and you will excuse this I know—I could not, I am sure, speak of whim or absurdity in regard to you, my dear benefactors. But I will try never to mind it. Lady D—— is so very very kind. I sometimes go out with the little dogs, Poodle and Clara; they are such dear pets, I could take them, and do often take them to my bosom. And then, the other day, when I was sitting playing with Clara and Poodle, beneath the elm tree, the gardener's son passed me, and—no he did not pass, that is to say not all at once—but he stopped, and asked me to take a flower, which he had pulled for me, which I did, and then he offered to shew me through the hot-houses, but I did not go. My dear mamma, do you think I should have gone? And then he left me; but yesterday a little boy gave me the following letter. And all that the letter contains is this—

"If you love me as I love thee,
What a loving couple we shall be!"

Love him!—oh, no—no—no—I will never, never walk that way again—I will never, never speak to him more. I love you, my own dear papa, and mamma, and my sisters, and Lady D——, and the two little dear doggies; but I never could love Donald M'Naughton; not but that he is good-looking, too, and young, and respected in the family; but he never can be a father or mother to me you know, as you have been. Oh! do write me soon, soon—and tell me all about the garden, and the ash-tree, and the arbour, and the flowers, and old Neptune your favourite, and everything. I remain, most affectionately, yours,

PHEBE FORTUNE.

"P. S.—But Fortune is not my name. Oh, that I had a name worth writing!—such a name as Lindsay, Crawford, Hamilton, Douglas. Oh! how beautifully Phebe Douglas would look on paper, and sound in one's ear!"

Such was the state of Phebe's mind and feelings at that interesting period of life when the female is in the transition from the mere girl to the real woman; and it was about this very period, when all the feelings are peculiarly alive to each fine impulse, that it fell to Phebe's lot to be severely tried. Day after day, and week after week, Lady D—— missed some valuable article of dress, some Flanders lace, some costly trinket, a ring it might be, or a bracelet. At last Lady D—— thought it proper to inform her lord of the fact, who, upon obtaining a search warrant unknown to any one save his lady, had the trunks of the whole household establishment strictly searched. Poor Phebe's little chest, "wi' her a' int," discovered, to the amazement of all, the whole lot of the missing articles. Lady D—— looked as if she had been suddenly struck with lightning; whilst poor Phebe regarded the whole as a jest, a method adopted by her Lady, or his Lordship, to try her character and firmness. She absolutely laughed at the denouement and seemed altogether unconcerned about the matter. This, to his Lordship in particular, appeared to be a confirmation of guilt; and he immediately ordered her person to be secured, evidence of her guilt to be made out, and a criminal trial to be instituted. When the full truth dawned upon poor Phebe, she sat as one would do who is vainly endeavouring to recollect something which has escaped their memory. Her colour left her; she was pale as Parian marble; her eyes became dim, and her ears sang; she fainted; and it was not till after great and repeated exertion that she was recovered, through the usual painful steps, to a perception of the outward world. She looked wildly around her. Lady D—— was standing with her handkerchief at her eyes—she had wept aloud.

"O Phebe," said her Ladyship, "are you guilty of this?"

Phebe repeated the word "guilty" twice, looked wildly on Lady D——'s eyes, and then, in an unsettled and alarmed manner, all round the room.

"Guilty!" she repeated—"Guilty of what? Who is guilty? It is not he. I am sure he could not be guilty. Oh, no—no—no—he is my father, my friend, my protector, my minny, my dear, dear minny—he could not do it! he never did it! You are all wrong!—and my poor, poor, head, is odd—odd—odd." Thus saying, she clasped her forehead in a frenzied manner, and nature again came to her relief in a second pause of insensibility, from which she only recovered to indicate that her remaining faculties had seemingly left her. Time, however, gradually awakened her to a perception of the sad reality; and it was from a chamber in the castle, to which she was confined, that she wrote the following letter to her original and kind protector:—

"OH, MY EVER DEAR FRIEND,—Your Phebe is accused of—I cannot write it, I cannot bear to look at the horrid word—of stealing. Oh, that you had let me lie where the wickedness of an unknown parent exposed my helplessness to the random tread of the passenger! Oh, come and see me; I grow positively confused; your Phebe is imprisoned in her own chamber; but my poor head is swimming again—there—there—I see everybody whirling about on the chimney tops—there they go—there they go! I can only see to write

PHEBE."

There was no date to this sad scrawl; but it needed none; for in twenty-four hours after it had arrived at the manse, I had set out on my way to Rosehall. The meeting betwixt the foster-father and the child was, of course, exceedingly affecting. Investigations into the whole matter were renewed; but no other way could be thought of for accounting for the presence of the missing property in Phebe's locked trunk, than the supposition which implied her guilt.

"I could stake my life, my salvation," said I, "on Phebe's innocence." But Lord D—— doubted; his Lady could not have believed it possible; but still there were, she said, similar cases on record—one, quite in point, had just occurred in her neighbourhood, where the guilty party had, up to the dishonest act, borne a very high character. The circuit trial came on in about ten days, and Phebe, accompanied by the minister, and the best legal advice, was seated at the bar on her trial. Witnesses were examined, who swore that they saw the trunk opened, and Lady D——'s property discovered; others, particularly the lady's maid, swore that she all along suspected Phebe, from seeing her always shutting, and often locking her door inside. She once looked through the key-hole, and saw Phebe busied with her trunk; she saw something in her hand that sparkled. Phebe had no exculpatory evidence but her simple averment that she knew not how the articles came there—she never brought them. The king's advocate having restricted the sentence, and the jury having brought in unanimously a verdict of guilty, the judge was on the point of pronouncing a sentence of banishment, when the poor pannel fainted. It was a most affecting scene to hear the sentence of banishment pronounced over a piece of insensate clay. All wept—even the judge; and Phebe was carried out of court, apparently quite dead.

Next morning I was found sitting with a cheerful countenance by Phebe's couch, in the prison-house. I had good news I said to impart to her:—

"The girl who has been the principal witness against you, has been suddenly seized, during the night, with an excruciating and evidently fatal disease; in the agonies of death she has confessed to me, and in the presence of Lady D—— too, that she had sworn to a lie; that she herself, with her own hand, and by means of a false key, placed the articles—which she had originally stolen with the view of retaining them—in your chest. This she had done from jealousy, having observed that her lover, the gardener's son, had fixed his affections upon you."

All this was solemnly attested in the presence of witnesses, and all this was conveyed in a suitable manner to the judge; in consequence of which, and through the usual preliminary steps, Phebe was set free, and again admitted into the full confidence and the friendship of the family.

It so happened, that a young nobleman had witnessed the whole trial from the bench, and had taken an exceeding interest in Phebe, whose beautiful and modest demeanour and countenance not even despair could entirely disfigure. Having made some inquiries respecting her history, he was led to make more, and discovered considerable emotion when I unfolded the whole truth to him. Still he said nothing, but took his departure, with many thanks for the information given. In a few days, this same young nobleman, of remarkably fine features, and pleasing expression, returned to the Manse of C——, having an elderly gentleman in the carriage along with him. He requested a private interview with me; and, in the presence of his friend, I travelled over again the whole particulars of the foundling's story, comparing dates, and investigating seeming inconsistencies. At last, he declared, at once, and in tears of amazement and joy—"Phebe Fortune is my own—my only *sister!*" I looked incredulous, and almost hinted at insanity; but the young nobleman still persevered in his averment. His father, a nobleman of high rank, far south of the Tweed, in order to gratify a passion which had driven him almost mad, had consented to *pretend* to marry privately (his own father being still alive, and set upon his son's marrying his cousin the Honourable Miss D——) a most beautiful girl, the daughter of a Chester yeoman of high respectability. The lady was removed from her native home, and lodged in a remote quarter of the town of Liverpool. A report was fabricated, and spread abroad by means of the newspapers, that a lady, who was minutely described, had jumped one evening into a boat, and, being rowed, at her request, to some distance, had plunged into the sea, and perished. Phebe's parents investigated the matter, as far as the boatman's evidence was concerned, and were satisfied, from his description of her person, that their dear Phebe, who, for some time past, had appeared troubled and even dispirited, had adopted suicide as a refuge from all her earthly cares. Phebe and the Honourable Mr L—— met frequently in secret, and a daughter was the fruit of their interviews. This daughter the young nobleman proposed to put out to nurse; but, in reality, to put beyond the reach of being ever recognised as his. A confidential person was obtained, herself a Scotchwoman, to carry the child into Fife, and there to expose it, under the circumstances and with the provision already mentioned. This person chanced to be a parishioner of mine, and the consequences were as already described. Having executed her task, she married a soldier, with whom she soon after sailed for our West India settlements. Phebe's second birth proved to be a male; and the boy was about to be removed in a similar manner from the mother, when she absconded from her now tyrannical husband, and her concealed home, refusing to be again separated from her own offspring. Her parents, who had regarded her as dead, were sufficiently surprised, but by no means gratified, when Phebe appeared again with the child in her arms. In the meantime, Lord L—— died, and the Honourable youth became Baron L—— of Houston-hope. Poor Phebe's averment respecting her previous marriage was regarded, even by her parents, as somewhat suspicious; and not being able to command the testimony of the person who married them, she was compelled to remain silent. The effort, however, soon cost her her life; and the boy, by his acknowledged father's interest, was placed in the army, and sent out to the West Indies. There he accidentally met with the woman his mother had often mentioned to him, who had carried off his sister. She confessed the whole truth to him; and, after a year or two, they both returned in the same ship to England. By this time, the noble husband, being free to dispose of his hand in matrimony, proposed, not for his cousin, as his father had contemplated, but for the daughter of an exceedingly wealthy Liverpool merchant. This person happened to be the near relative of him who had called what was deemed only a pretended priest to perform the marriage ceremony; and, seeing the danger which his relative would run, should he give away his daughter, in hopes of her offspring heiring the title and property, when a legitimate heir probably existed, he divulged the secret to his relations. This naturally led to a denouement; and Lord L—— being thus frustrated in his object, and being at the same time a person governed more by passion than reason, shot the person who had deceived him through the arm; and then, thinking that he had committed murder, he blew out his own brains.

The brother of Phebe, after a long and complicated legal investigation, was declared and served heir to the title and vast property. Taking the clergyman who had married his mother along with him, he had gone into Scotland partly to visit his uncle, Lord D——, and partly, by the assistance of the priest and Scotchwoman, to discover what had become of his sister. Her likeness to himself and his mother had struck him forcibly in court, and the investigation and discovery followed.

To describe the interview betwixt the brother and sister is far beyond my power. Every heart will appreciate it more than ink and paper can possibly express. It was a pure—a long—a terrible embrace; but it spoke volumes, heart met heart and lips were glued to lips, till breathing

became inconvenient. All parties rejoiced. Phebe, on her way south along with her brother, spent a whole day at the Manse. I was absolutely insane with joy; and my wife told me privately—"My dear, our fortune is made; we'll get all our boys out to India now." My daughters, too, kissed and fondled their sister, "and all went merry as a marriage bell."

"How sweet is pleasure after pain!"

The contrast of Phebe's fortune greatly enhanced the enjoyment; and, in the space of a few short months, Phebe Fortune was married to her own cousin, the son of Lord and Lady D——, her kind protectors. The old couple are still alive; but their children, with a numerous offspring, live upon one of their estates in Ayrshire, and exhibit to all around them the blessings which a humane and generous aristocracy may disseminate amidst neighbours and dependents. The brother of Phebe, Lord L——, still remains a bachelor; but has proved to his mother's relatives, as well as to the parties who befriended her by deceiving his dishonourable parent, that he feels the obligation, and rewards it, by making them one way or another entirely independent.

I go my weekly rounds amongst those now happy families, and have experienced the truth of my wife's prophecy; for both my boys are advantageously disposed of, and, on the marriage of my eldest daughter, Phebe Fortune made her a present of one thousand pounds.

THE ENTHUSIAST.

THERE is a splendid book written, called "The Enthusiast;" but, though it discovers the author's talents, to my apprehension and feelings, it fails, after a few pages, to keep alive the attention—and why? Just because the author, portraying the general character of enthusiasm, steps beyond himself and his own personal observations, and talks about the workings of the principle in a new and untried combination of circumstances. From the law which regulates projectiles *in aere*, he reasons to what should regulate them *in vacuo*; he reasons from things seen to things unseen; and then leaves both himself and his reader in the mud and the mist of mere supposition. But in what I mean to say of enthusiasm, I pledge myself to state nothing but what I have felt or seen; and I shall separate this principle from all others, only marking its influence when it is in a state of intensity, as one marks the electric spark, not in the cloud or the machine, but as it passes from one locality to another. Enthusiasm is, in fact, the electrical element of life. It is more or less everywhere, and often where it is least suspected. It bursts forth, occasionally, in the character of the warrior, the scholar, the poet, the speculator; but it remains as substantially, perhaps, though not so ostensibly, in the bosom of the parent, the husband, the wife, the child, the friend, the kinsman. The tradesman is an enthusiast if he hopes to succeed; the merchant, the labourer, the mechanic. I have seen a shoemaker as enthusiastic in making his shoes fit neatly without pinching, as the scholar would be in divining the meaning of a difficult passage. Without enthusiasm man had never been what he is. It found him in the world naked, and it clothed him; houseless, and it covered him; defenceless, and it armed him. It run him up through the pastoral, the agricultural, to the commercial state. It composed the "Idylls" of Theocritus, the "Georgics" of Virgil, and the "Fleece" of Dyer. Without this there had been no shepherds to sing, and no poets to sing of their singing; no husbandmen to labour; and no Virgils and Hesiods to speak of their labour and argonautic expeditions; and no sacred bard to celebrate their pursuit of the golden fleece, commerce. But though all this is true in the enlarged and diluted sense of the word, it is not so in that sense in which the term is commonly understood. He is quite an enthusiast in the pursuit of knowledge—of a fox—or of hoped for discovery—or of fame—or of fortune—anybody knows to be terms applied to an unusually spirited pursuit of any or of all of these. But the enthusiam of which I speak is more limited still. It is a glow which originates and cools in the same bosom—which has no view beyond itself. It is not a mean to an end, but mean and end in one. Look at that boy—he is never to be found, at a leisure hour, without a fishing-rod in his hand; at that other youth—his book is his constant companion by the fountain and the hill; at that religious devotee—prayer and Bible-reading are his heaven; at that butcher's boy, who is now killing a lamb—his father has put the knife into his hand to please him—he is an enthusiast in butchery—his passion feeds on itself—it is like virtue its own reward—he cares not for cutlets or brown roasts.

Having thus narrowed the field to a class, I shall now select an individual, and that individual shall be one with whom I have had many opportunities of becoming well acquainted. Curious reader, it is not you, nor your brother Robert, nor your uncle Andrew, nor any, so far as I know, of your kindred—it is "myself." And how has enthusiasm wrought in me? That I am just going to tell you. It has made me, in the first place, miserable—most miserable; and I'll tell you how. I took it into my head, when a boy of about eight or nine years of age, that my mother—my only living parent—was mortal; nay, that she was so old and infirm—though she was not more than fifty, and in perfect health—that she would drop down dead even before my eyes. I followed her wherever she went; held on by her apron string, roaring aloud most mournfully, and shedding, besides, a world of tears. In vain did my kind mother endeavour to rally me, to reason me, to scold me, and even to chastise me out of my dream—it had taken such hold of my imagination, that, sleeping or waking, it was there. When my mother travelled anywhere abroad, I was sure to be after her like a domestic cur. When she went to offer up her private oblations to a throne of mercy, I crept in under her plaid, and heard every audible aspiration. In my sleep she was still before me as I had seen my grandmother—the lips parted, the eyes open, and set in night—it was horrible—I started into real life, and wept aloud. I rushed into my mother's apartment, felt her face all over, and cried bitterly. Reader, have you always been made of pot-mettle? Have you never experienced any such nervous enthusiasm as this? Have you been at all times a child of realities—a very steady, thinking, prudent person; slept like a top, eat like a raven, and talked to the amazement even of the minister himself? You may be a steady good person now. You may even be married, with a family of thirteen children. You may have succeeded in the world, and feathered your nest. You may have presided well at various public dinners, and

"Never wrote
"One line which, dying, you would wish to blot"—

and for this simple and best of all reasons, that you have never written, as far as the public is concerned, any lines at all. You may be a sound-headed lawyer, a calculating merchant, an honest shopkeeper, or, what is still more commendable, because more rare, an honest judge. You may sole shoes or make great-coats to a nicety—fabricate chairs, or nails, or pins, or periwigs, to a thought; but you are no enthusiast. Do you see that poor maniac, who is just receiving a visit from his mother in his cell—whose eyes are turned up in wild uproar to the roof of his dungeon—and who, in the damp icicles, is apostrophising sun, moon, and stars, Venus, Jupiter, and Aldubaran? That emaciated form of scarcely twenty years of age—which a weeping

mother clasps, and whom a frenzied son convulsively strains to his bare and fleshless breast—that is Ferguson the poet, the prince of enthusiasts—he at whose genius Burns lighted that torch which has filled the world with light! Do you mark that form sitting amongst the sands of Syracuse? The city is taken by the Roman armies. The enemy are within the walls; pillage and murder are the order of the hour. But what is that to him?—he is only an enthusiast. The soldier has challenged him to surrender; his sword is uplifted, and the challenge is repeated. He heeds it not; the sword descends—and the greatest mathematician, the most complete enthusiast which the world has ever seen, lies before you, a gashed and mangled corpse—the world! its wonders, its atoms, its various formations! the laws—the eternal laws of its construction and form. There is one who sung sweetly—oh, how divinely! There is one who sung sublimely—yes, as one overpowered with the spirit of Him who said, "Let there be light, and there was light;" but the cord which was overstrained is snapped, and the bow is unstrung; the pressure upon the delicate fibres of the brain has been too much, and the building of God has given way. Poor Lucretius, the disease of which thou didst expire was "enthusiasm."

But it is time to shift the scene—to resort to that exquisite happiness, and extensive benefit to society, which enthusiasm is calculated to produce. Poetry is the language of nature. All languages originated in poetry—the ballad is the mother of all living and dead books. Whether it be repeated in the shape of Fescenine catches, on the banks of the Tiber—of glorious Epic, on those of the Scamander—of chivalrous narrative, by the rapid Rhone, or sweet Liger—whether it employ the time, and the enthusiastic efforts of the bard, the troubadour, the harper, or the minstrel—whether it resound through the recesses of Pindus, of Arcady, or of Yarrow—still, still the ballad presents the first germ of literature. What are the earlier pages of Livy's History, but popular ballads, connected and narratived?—what the history of our own Scotland—of her Bruces, and Wallaces, and all her many and valorous achievements—but ballads? And—

> "How canst thou resist the boundless store
> Of charms, which nature to her votaries yields—
> The warbling woodland—the resounding shore—
> The pomp of groves, and garniture of fields—
>
> Oh, how canst thou resist, and hope to be forgiven?"

But who can or does resist?—Not even the robber Moor, who soliloquizes so poetically the setting sun. Not

> "The swain, who journeying homeward, from
> A day's long labour, feels
> The form of beauty smiling on his soul!"

Poetry is spread as widely through the human heart, as is electricity through all the works of nature. Man can no more help being poetical, than he can newmodel his frame. But what is the love, the passion of poetry, but enthusiasm—enthusiasm, which converts everything it looks upon into beauty and sublimity The man is born desert and lonely—and is there no beauty in solitude, no grandeur in expansion? The mountains are highland, wild, heathy, and tempest-beaten—and is there no sublimity in their cliffs, their scarred fronts, and scarred sides? The landscape is covered with wood, or there is at least a pleasing alternation of forest and glade, of peopled levels and wooded hills—and does not the soul nestle softly and lovingly amidst these pleasing varieties? But you are making faces, and there is something like an incipient yawn beginning to travel over your beauteous lips, my dearest madam. Well, I'll have done, with advising you to wed the "spirit of poetry," if you wish to be completely happy. You need not write poems, ma'am—that is not necessary. Livy never wrote poetry, and yet he is every inch a poet; Robertson never wrote verse, and yet he is essentially poetical. Witness Mexico and Montezuma. "Am I lying on a bed of roses?"—There, for example, is me, *now*—ay, just me—I am every inch a poet! and yet, with the exception of a few things which need not be excepted, I never wrote any poetry:—yet, I see you want a story, and you say, am I not reading "The Tales of the Borders, and of Scotland?"—I cry you mercy, and shall give you the results of my enthusiasm.

When in Edinburgh, at the College, while others prolonged the debauch, it might be, till two or three of a fine moonlight night, I have stolen away about twelve, taken my course through the King's Park to the echoing rock, and from thence to that long hollow valley of Bagdad, which runs betwixt Arthur Seat and Salisbury Craigs, and there I have seen the Island of Inchkeith lying, like a glittering diamond, on the face of the deep, and the silver sea, and hazy shores of Fife, and the fleecy heavens, and the stars and the 'bony lady moon,' and two figures in the moonlight; they are walking away from me, and are busily engaged in conversation—they do not perceive me—I will ensconce myself behind this large stone till I see what may happen. They have now sat down on the greensward, and I hear their voices very much elevated. The woman is reproaching the man in loud and angry tones—the man makes no reply; or if he does, it is in an under tone—Ha! he has sprung upon the woman all at once, like a tiger, and she screams 'Murder, murder!' aloud. Shall I allow a poor woman to be murdered in the solitude of nature, without making an effort, even at the risk of my own life, to save her? My resolution, nerved by the wine I had drunk, was taken in an instant—I sprang forward, crying loudly to my *companions* to assist me. When the horrible object understood how things were going, and imagining, no doubt, that there were more than *one* witness of its horrible doings, it took to its heels with the speed of lightning. I did not pursue; in fact, I had no inclination to do so, it was sufficient for me if I could save life—I did not wish to take it, either personally or legally. When I went up to the poor woman, she was all astonishment, and her first accents were uttered in thanksgiving to Almighty God for sending me into the desert for her rescue. I found that, although the villain had clutched her by the throat, he had not had time to suffocate her. Her throat was indeed sore from the pressure, and she breathed for some time with difficulty; but there were no deadly symptoms about her. What a mysterious Providence is about us!—and we often know it not. I had originally no intention of taking a moonlight walk that evening, or rather morning, had it not been to avoid the impertinence of a fellow-member of the Dialectic Society, who manifestly wished, in his cups, to fasten a quarrel upon me. I stepped out from Young's, and was off. I was manifestly the messenger of Heaven, and could not help regarding myself with a kind of reverence. The poor woman, who was in fact the wife of this worthless man, gave me her history, to the following purpose:—

"That brute, as you very properly call him, is my husband, and was once as kind and affectionate to me as I could wish. Ours was what is called a pure love marriage, for I was born to better circumstances and prospects than, from my present condition and appearance, you may well imagine" Here the poor woman shed tears, and proceeded—"I was the daughter of a small proprietor in the neighbourhood of Durham, where the Princess of Wales' regiment of Light Dragoons was raised, and was then lying, under the command of Lord Darlington. We—that is to say, my father, my mother, my sister, and myself—used to go frequently into a field adjoining the city, and see this really handsome regiment reviewed, and go through their exercise. One day there was a mock battle represented,

in the very field adjoining to my father's house. Several regiments were collected together, from Newcastle and elsewhere, for the purpose. It was to be a great show; and the whole town of Durham, as well as all the country round, were congregated to see the battle. Cannons were fired, charges of cavalry were made, and a detachment of the Darlington troop rode in pursuit of the supposed enemy, past our door. My father and I were at the upper window when the troop came dashing along, clearing fences, and springing over ditches in the finest style imaginable. Just as they came opposite to my father's door, a pig, which had escaped from its confinement in the back court, dashed headlong forward amongst the feet of the horses. One of the horses fell; and the rider, having pitched on his head, was seemingly killed on the spot. He was immediately carried into our house, and surgical aid was at hand. It was a dislocation of the neck bone, and was immediately put to rights; but the patient was bled, and ordered to be kept quiet for some days. I naturally became the young gentleman's nurse; for he was the son of a poor but titled family in the neighbourhood of Darlington. Mr Fitzwilliam was a handsome man, about my own age; but he was penniless, and a soldier of fortune. My father, early seeing the danger of my remaining in the way of temptation, had me sent off to a grand house in the neighbourhood of Newcastle. But William Fitzwilliam had won my heart, and, in spite of all watchings and lookings, we were man and wife in less than a fortnight after my departure for Newcastle.

"We were married at Gretna Green; and I have accompanied him ever since, through Carlisle and Dumfries, Ayr, Glasgow, and ultimately to Jock's Lodge, where the regiment is now lying. He has taken lodgings for me in Edinburgh; but, of late, has sadly deserted me. I have been enabled, by taking up linen, and sewing articles for the ladies' exhibition, to do something in aid of our scanty funds. But William has of late undergone a sad change. He has become addicted to gambling; has even introduced improper characters, both male and female, into my presence; and has talked particularly in his cups about a divorce and separation. He wishes *me*, he says, to divorce him; and takes every method of giving me sufficient grounds for so doing; but, with all his errors and vices, I love him still, nor can I think, now that I have time to reflect on it, he would have murdered me outright, even though you had not so providentially interfered. He has of late succeeded to a title, by the death of an uncle, who has disinherited him, and left his vast property past him. This preyed upon his spirits of late; and I have reason to know that he has been making love, and even offers of marriage, to a rich widow lady, who dwells not far from York Place, Edinburgh. But my marriage lines lie sadly in his way; and, it was to attain by force, what he could not otherwise, that he had almost, and, but for you, would have perhaps altogether, murdered me, a few minutes ago. Poor William! my heart still bleeds for him; but I will never give up, whilst I live, the only means which I have of proving myself an honest woman."

All Edinburgh rung next morning with the news—Lord M—— had shot himself dead in his bedroom.

In the year 1831, I had occasion to be several days in Durham. It occurred to me, one day, whilst I was sauntering about the Cathedral, that the house, where probably still lived the father of the poor, unfortunate Mrs, or rather *Lady* M——, might be in the neighbourhood. I made inquiry; and, without much difficulty, found it out. From what I learned in the neighbourhood, the poor woman had never taken up her husband's title. Her father, on hearing of her husband's tragical end, had relented, and taken her home to keep his house, and comfort him in his old age. I asked for her father, and was shewn into a neat parlour, where the old man sat. comfortably pillowed, but terribly pained with gout and a complication of diseases. I introduced myself as an acquaintance of Mrs Fitzwilliam, who was immediately sent for, and entered the parlour. She did not know me, nor was it wonderful; for, as I went to the country next day after the night adventure, I had no opportunity of calling upon her. Indeed, I should scarcely have known her either—her dress and manner were so much more imposing than they had been at our first and only interview. However, upon my referring to the circumstances, she immediately took me by the hand, burst into tears, and, presenting me to her father, who was almost blind—"Papa," said she, "this is the gentleman who saved my life." I had the old man's blessing. A bottle of home-made wine was called for and discussed, and I was pressed to come back to dinner; which, however, I politely refused, for I did not know how far my enthusiastic temperament might have gone, in the case of a truly beautiful woman, whom I had saved from death, and whose gratitude led her to think very favourably of me. I have not heard of her lately; but mean to write to my brother-in-law, who lives in Durham, about her, and to ascertain whether she is still living or dead; whether she is yet unmarried, or has again ventured to face the blacksmith.

Such was one of my moonlight adventures; which, if you are so disposed, you are at liberty to denominate a "matter of moonshine." But my enthusiasm has not been limited to moonbeams. I am the mountain child, and wedded even up to this hour to the mountain-land, with all its wild, striking, and expanding associations. To meet a fair maiden in a *fair* is pleasant, as also to replenish her lap with sweetmeats and trinkets. To get "a canny hour at een, your arms about your deary," is snug, comfortable and something more. Burns prefers "rigs of barley," and the "green rush bushes," as a courting parlour; whilst,

> "Last night, in my late rambles,
> All in the Isle of Sky,
> I met a lovely creature
> Up in the mountains high."

Now, the Isle of Sky, and its high mountains, are entire strangers to me; but I am well acquainted with two pretty decent hills, not above twenty miles from Dumfries. called Queensberry, *little* and *big;* and, amidst their elevated and retired glens, the following incident look place. I have from my boyhood been distractedly fond of fishing; and, up to this hour, whenever I visit my native glen, the mania returns; and, though things are sadly changed, and trouts are diminished both in numbers and size, yet still, in spite of all disadvantages, I fish. It was on an excursion on my way, (whilst a young man of twenty, from college,) that I found myself, one dark and misty day, amidst the deep and mazy windings of the *Brawn*. I was quickly and successively basketing trout after trout, humming all the while some old Scotch sonnet, and calling in my little dog, *Don*, from the sheep who were pasturing on the adjoining hill, called the Dod, when a voice from the depths of the mist and the solitude reached my ear. It was a voice of wo and deep lamentation. Having chid Don's impertinence in giving tongue somewhat too freely, I found, seated upon a grey stone, and weeping aloud, a young woman, about my own age, with dark blue eyes, and a countenance of the most prepossessing expression. She sat beside an infant, which she had deposited on a bed of collected fern or braken, and who was fast asleep. When she saw me, she started, and seemed disposed to fly; but when I used my means to reassure her, she ventured to accost me, by informing me, that she had lost her way—that she was nurserymaid at Mitchelslacks, and had wandered that morning with her charge beyond her accustomed range, and, the mist coming suddenly on, she found it impossible to retrace her steps. I thought myself quite in possession of the

information which she wanted, and told her that I would see her and her little charge safely and immediately home. So, giving up my sport for the time, I took up the sleeping infant, and immediately addressed myself, accompanied by the fair wanderer, to the journey. We were several miles distant from Mitchelslacks; but, as I considered myself as familiar with the ground, I struck immediately over the pathless hill, by what I termed a *near cut*, instead of retracing the stream for a couple of miles, and then crossing the Dod by a cart track. The child awoke, and finding itself in strange hands, screamed violently; so I was soon compelled to place the infant in the loveliest bosom I had ever seen. I felt my frame tremble all over, as I came into contact with pretty Peggy's person; and yet, for all the wealth of old Q——, I would not have even conceived anything which might occasion alarm to so beautiful and manifestly so innocent a creature. Yet I could not keep my eyes off her, and found out, in spite of a dark and crawling mist, that her frame was perfect symmetry, and rounded into that ripened plumpness which bespeaks the fully matured woman. We conversed freely as we travelled; and my romantic feelings became so excited with my position, that I thought but occasionally, and then indistinctly, of the direction, right or wrong, in which we were advancing. Peggy, from time to time, admonished me, that she trusted to me alone, as she was totally unacquainted with the hill. Having attained, at last, the summit of the steep, I expected to have found a cairn of stones, and, alongside of it, a shepherd's shieling or turf hut, where he reposed at noon-day, and shared his bread and milk with his faithful curs; but, no such shieling or cairn were to be seen. It then became manifest to me, all at once, that I, as well as my fair companion of the mist, had lost my way, and that, unless the day, which was still becoming darker and darker, should clear up, we should be in danger of increasing instead of lessening the distance betwixt us and Mitchelslacks. To increase our embarrassment, the child cried continually, evidently from hunger, and great drops of rain came down like hail-stones amidst the close and crawling mist. It was evident that a thunder storm was brooding—nor were we long kept in suspense; for, all at once, the mist was kindled into flame around us, and a sharp, smart crack, followed by the roar of a thousand hills, told us that we were in the very centre of the electric cloud. Poor Peggy sank down at once, overcome with terror; whilst I, immediately and intuitively, squatted down beside her, clasping her to my bosom, child and all. I may truly say, with Patie, in regard to another lovely Peggy—

> "Whilst hard and fast I held her in my grips,
> My very soul cam' louping to my lips."

But the awful flash and peal were repeated, and then, in very truth, and not metaphorically,

> "Down rushed a deluge of sonorous hail."

Peggy fainted outright, and the child screamed itself into hysterics, when, all at once, a couple of shaggy shepherd's dogs gave tongue in the neighbourhood. A young, yellow-haired shepherd lad stood over us in an instant; and, guessing at once how matters really stood, had us all removed, as soon as Peggy had recovered her senses, into the small shieling, in the immediate neighbourhood of which we were unconsciously wandering. We had to stoop, and enter upon our hands and knees; and, when we were all stowed away, there was not an inch of houseroom which was not occupied either by human beings or dogs. But, though sitting or rather lying on rushes, these rushes were dry, and our humble shelter warded off the merciless pelting, whilst the thunder cloud gradually took to the top of the higher Queensberry, and left us with a clear sunny day, and two miles to walk to the child's home. The truth was, that the family at Mitchelslacks had become alarmed by the absence of maid and child, and had sent nearly half a score of shepherds, and a full score of dogs, to the hills and glens, on a voyage of discovery; whilst Mr and Mrs Harkness, the parents, were in a state which may more easily be imagined than described. All were now well; and I accompanied the young shepherd, with his sweetheart—for such I soon discovered they were—home, and had the happiness, by running on before, to be the first to announce the safety of their child to the worthy and distracted parents. They had, indeed given up both the nurse and child for lost, and their despair had been at least equal to their joy, when I ran forward and threw the child in the mother's lap. Now, who could doubt that enthusiasm was abounding in the breast, and shining in the tear-wet eye of the mother, as she pressed the little lost one to her bosom? It was, verily. But, after all I have said of the nature of this extraordinary feeling, I know not if it is ever experienced in a stronger and purer form than in that of *joy*. I care nothing for the cause—it may be any one you please. All I insist for is, that it shall be capable of stimulating, or rather exciting—for the former is a phrenological word—the mind of the individual, however stupid, obese, or phlegmatic to the boiling point of that most intense species of human happiness. All the many forms of the feeling seem to tend to this as the point of their realization. Pythagoras and his proposition, Argand and his lamp, Mungo Park and the waters of the Joliba, Mrs Harkness and her child, and the child, probably, next day with a butterfly, are all instances of the feeling in the point of gratification. But I have been again wandering from my story—all enthusiasm together; for there was love in the affair, which many insist upon being the strongest, if not the purest example that can be presented of this mysterious and pervading essence. Those who think so can take their own view; I retain mine; and it is very probable that we are both wrong; and you, ma'am, to whom I formerly addressed myself, will put us right, by telling us that poetry is the only genuine and pure form in which this moral electricity can exhibit itself. Let it be as you say, though I would advise you to be on your guard against your friend Miss ——, who lost her lover last week, and will insist that *hope* is the soul of the feeling, and that, when that is gone, enthusiasm has no more chance of getting into the mind or heart than I have of getting into your favour by this digression from a story of love, originating in, or perfected by *mist*, one of the most romantic mediums of the tender passion. So, to make a speedy conclusion. about a fortnight after this incident, I was again at my old sport, when I was accosted by my young friend, the shepherd, who now figured in holiday attire, and informed that, as this was his wedding day, my company would be acceptable *o'er by yonder* at two o'clock. I pursued my sport till then, and, in the old cha'mer of Mitchel slacks, saw Joseph Robson and Margaret Gibson made man and wife. There was neither dancing nor revelment of any kind, but there was a plentiful meal, many songs, and as much punch, prepared in a large bowl, as the company chose to make use of. All went merry as a marriage bell. And now I find I am checked by want of space at the moment when the *jar* is fully charged, and the subtle spirit might have exploded in many more pretty coruscations.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE LAIRD OF LUCKY'S HOW.

HAVE any of our readers ever been at the Hague? It doesn't much signify whether they have or not. They know that it is one of the most beautiful towns in the Netherlands, and that it is not a little famous in ancient story; and their knowing this is quite enough for our present purpose. If, however, they knew the town a little more intimately, they would know that one of its principal and most ancient streets is called the Hoogstraat; and that here, once on a time, stood the principal inn or hostelry of the town. It was an old-fashioned house, with a great variety of projecting and excrescent structures, of all sorts and sizes, stuck to it, to increase its internal accommodation, and to puzzle the curious inquirer—at least this seemed a part of the design—who, while taking an outside view, wondered what they could all be intended for.

Notwithstanding, however, the somewhat uncouth and perplexing appearance of the exterior of the Drouthsloken—which was the name of the ancient hostel in question—it was a sufficiently handsome and comfortable house within. Its kitchen, in particular, was a sight; it was so clean, so bright, and so cheerful; shining all round with pewter trenchers and brass utensils of various descriptions, all as lustrous as whiting and hard rubbing could make them. The place was a treat to look at; and no less a treat to look at, was its jolly landlord, Thonder Vander Tromp. From stem to stern, Thonder was of the regular Dutch build, which, without descending to particulars, we may say consists, as our readers know, in exhibiting an amplitude of material at all points of the person. In this respect, our good friend, Thonder, might be considered a *chef d'œuvre;* for he was of the most magnificent dimensions, especially latitudinally. In longitude, indeed, he might be considered as a little deficient. He was of no great height; but his girth was superb, and told a tale of good living, with an unction which no language could approach. In this tale the ruddy, jovial countenance of mine host of the Drouthsloken cordially joined; and, supported by its hilarous testimony, the facts therein set forth.

Having thus shortly described both mine host and his hostel, we proceed to say that, on a certain evening in the middle of the winter of 1651, a stranger, carrying a small bundle under his arm, walked, or rather stalked—for their was something uncouth in his gait—into the passage of the Drouthsloken. He was wrapped up in a Scottish plaid, and wore on his head the well-known flat blue bonnet of the Scottish Lowlands. In person, he was tall and spare, with the grave and serious cast of countenance so characteristic of that people whose national dress he wore. Unpolished, however, as the exterior of this person bespoke him to be, there was yet, in his light-grey eye, a mingled expression of determination and intelligence, that never failed to secure the respect which his manner and first appearance might well have forfeited. His age seemed about forty or forty-five.

Finding no one to whom he might address himself in the passage of the inn, the stranger held on his way to its further extremity—no trifling distance—towards which he was attracted by sounds of laughter and merriment, issuing from the kitchen of the Drouthsloken, which was situated at the farther end of the passage by which the house was intersected, and the same with that which he was now traversing.

The sounds of merriment by which the stranger had been attracted proceeded from a group of young men, who, standing in the form of a semicircle in front of the jolly landlord of the house, who, again, stood with his back to the fire, wielding a huge black bottle in his hand, were indulging in uproarious laughter at the witty sayings which he, the latter, seemed throwing amongst them like so many squibs and crackers.

At the moment that our friend of the plaid and bonnet entered the kitchen of the Drouthsloken, mine hilarous host was standing, as we have said, with his back to the fire—a roaring one, by the way—and looking the very personification of all that's joyous, and comfortable, and care-dispelling. A bright and broad red waistcoat covered his portly front; but buttoned so short a way up as to expose a dazzling display of snow-white linen beneath. Across this brilliant garment there lay, also, the folds of a pure white apron, tucked up with business-like smartness. Dark velveteen small clothes, with well-polished shoes, on which shone a pair of massive silver buckles, completed the outer man of Thonder Vander Tromp.

Amongst the merry group of which Tromp was one, something like a sensation was created by the entrance of the stranger. The career of badinage was instantly arrested, and the eyes of the whole party turned towards him. Undismayed by the general attention he had excited, the stranger coolly deposited his bundle on a side-table, and, approaching at once the fire and the group by which it was surrounded, delivered himself, as he did so, of the very simple and homely remark—

"There's a wat nicht, gentlemen."

Now, the stranger, although he had thus expressed himself, had not ventured to hope that his language would be understood. He had spoken mechanically as it were, and delivered himself in his usual way, simply because he could do no otherwise, and because he thought it necessary to say something. Great, therefore, was his surprise, and, we may add, his joy also, when one of the young men of the party, of singularly graceful manners and bearing, acknowledged his greeting in excellent English, and with great politeness and civility of speech.

Delighted at having met with a native of Great Britain, which he could not doubt the young man who had addressed him was—

"Faith, but I am richt glad, sir," said the stranger—"excuse my freedom—at having met wi' a countryman, as I tak ye to be, sir—in this outlandish place. It's mair than I expeckit, I'm sure. I had nae thochts o' meetin wi' ony but ane."

"And, pray, who was that one, my good friend?" said the young man, throwing, at the same time, a rapid look of intelligence around on his companions, who seemed at once to comprehend its meaning. "Who was that one, my good friend," he said, "if I may ask, without subjecting myself to a charge of impertinence?"

"Ou, nae impertinence at a', sir; only ye'll excuse me keepin my thoom on the matter ye inquire aboot till I ken better wha's speerin. Excuse me, sir, excuse me, for this plainness," continued the stranger, smiling; "but I hae come frae a country whaur a slip o' the tongue, in thae times, micht cost a man his head; and that maks folk wary, ye ken."

"Faith, and good reason it should, friend," replied the young man, laughingly. "Thou hast well accounted for thy caution. But recollect, thou art now in a different country, mine honest friend, and hast no need to be so guarded in thy speech."

"Feth, sir, I dinna ken. That may be; but if ye had fan the ticklin o' a tow aboot yer craig, as I hae dune, ye wadna forget it in a hurry, nor the lesson it taught ye to keep yer tongue atween yer teeth."

"Well, no doubt; that certainly is rough schooling," said the young cavalier; but I repeat again, that thou art now in a different country, friend; and one where thou hast nothing to fear from a reasonable use of thy tongue."

"Aweel, it may be sae, sir," replied the imperturbable stranger; "but I ken o' nae country whar a calm sough's no guid counsel.

"Ha! ha! ha! right, friend, right," roared mine jolly host of the Drouthsloken, with open mouth and noisy laugh. "It is not goot to say too moosh anywhere; no more in the Hague as any oder place. But here is all honourable gentlemen," he added, casting a furtive glance of good-humoured meaning at the young man who had first addressed the Scotch visitor, "who will not make bad use of what you shall say."

"Ou, I hae nae doot o' that at a', sir," replied the latter; "but, to be plain wi' ye, it's no my intention to say onything that onybody can mak ony use o', either guid, bad, or indifferent." And having said this, the speaker shewed a very palpable desire to put an end to the conference, which he evidently began to think was studiously directed by the other party towards an elucidation of his purposes in visiting the Hague. In this disposition, however, he was by no means joined by the party in whose presence he was, particularly by the young man by whom he had been first addressed, who evinced a gratification in the peculiar humour of the stranger, and an interest in him altogether, that would not permit of his being shaken off. So far indeed, was he from permitting this, that he insisted on the latter's joining him in a bottle of wine, which he instantly ordered mine jolly host of the Drouthsloken to produce.

On the return of the latter, bearing a bottle of wine in one hand and a screw in the other—

"Will your, your"——he said, but was here interrupted by a wink from the person he addressed, which had the evident effect of making him substitute a different word for that which he had intended to use, and he added "your honour." "Will your honour not go up stair to your own favourite apartment, de leetle blue parlour?"

"No, no, Mynheer Tromp," replied the young cavalier, "we'll just stay where we are. The night is cold, and I have always thought your kitchen the most comfortable and cheerful apartment in your house. So place us a table here, close by the fire, if you please."

Mynheer Vander Tromp bowed an humble assent; and, in an instant after, a small round table of walnut tree, shining like a mirror, was placed in the desired situation. Bottles and glasses covered it in a twinkling, and, in a twinkling, also, was the party seated around it, including our friend of the bonnet and plaid. This worthy person at first shyed the good fellowship thus thrust upon him; but, gradually warming with the wine he drank—for bottle succeeded bottle with marvellous celerity—he became by degrees less and less reserved in his manner, until at length his natural caution giving way altogether before the increasing pressure of the vinous influence, he became as communicative as he had before been the reverse.

Availing himself of the altered disposition of the stranger, the young cavalier, whom we have represented as having more especially attached himself to the former, again endeavoured to extract from him the purpose of his visit to the Hague; and his attempt was now successful.

"Aweel, I'll just tell ye Gude's truth, gentlemen," he said, in reply to a question, or rather hint on the subject of explanation which had just been addressed to him by his young friend; and for the reply to which all waited. "I'll just tell ye Gude's truth, as I think ye're a' honourable men, an' wadna willingly bring a man into trouble wha has gien ye nae cause o' offence. Ye see then, friens, I hae just arrived frae Scotland, an' hae come here to see our unfortunate young King, Charles the Second that should be, wha's unhappy story ye dootless a' ken. I hae been ruined oot o' hoose and ha' for the part I took in his puir faither's behalf, and hae been obliged to flee my ain country, besides, for the same reason; and hae now come here to see if his Majesty, God bless him, could afford me ony sort o' protection till the storm that's noo tearin a' up by the roots in Scotland blaws by; and that's just the hail affair, gentlemen."

Long ere the stranger had concluded this account of the purpose of his visit to the Hague, a look of intelligence, which originated with his young friend, had passed amongst his auditors, and in the case of the former was associated with a peculiar expression of sympathy. Both, however, the look alluded to, and the latter symptom of a yet deeper feeling, was unobserved by the person whose communication had given rise to them. Becoming now querist in turn, he asked, "if ony o' the gentlemen could tell him whaur the King leeved, and if they could put him on a way o' getting introduced to him?"

"You could not have lighted more luckily for that, my friend," said the young man to whom we have already so often alluded, "than you have done in coming amongst us; for it happens that I hold a confidential place near the person of Charles, and will have much pleasure in exerting my influence in procuring you the introduction you desire."

"Mony thanks to ye, frien," replied the martyr to royalty—"Mony thanks to ye, if ye mean by Charles his Majesty the King o' England—God bless him?"

"I certainly do, my friend. I mean him and no other."

"Weel, sir—excuse my freedom—if ye do, I think ye micht ca' him sae. Wha can dispute his title, although his back be at the wa'?"

"Oh! no one—no one, my good friend, I believe—that is, lawfully," replied the young cavalier, laughingly; "but, seeing his present circumstances—a wandering exile in a foreign land, crownless and coinless—we somehow or other cannot get our tongues about those sounding titles that are his birthright. We prefer calling him simply Charles, or English Charles; and, I rather think, he prefers it himself. His titles he thinks best left in abeyance in the meantime."

"Aweel, if it be his ain pleasure, I hae nae mair to say. Perhaps it's as prudent and becomin; for, as ye say, sir, a king that has neither a croon on his head nor in his pouch is in but a sair condition for his dignity. That maun be allowed."

There was not much in this remark itself to excite merriment; but there was certainly something in the naïve manner in which it was delivered that was calculated to produce this effect; and it did. A shout of laughter, in which the speaker's young friend was the loudest and heartiest performer, acknowledged the peculiarity to which we have alluded. On the laugh subsiding, the latter again addressed the former saying—

"But, friend, you have not yet told us by what name we should address you."

"As to that," replied the stranger, smilingly, "I believe the maist appropriate name or title ye could gie me at the present moment wad be that o' the Launless Laird. But it wasna aye sae. I had a bit guid property in the Loudans, ca'ed Lucky's How, every clod o't my ain, wi' a yearly rental o' forty merks guid siller, forby the thirlage o' the Mill o' Meldrum, that was worth a guid twa or three merks mair. But a's gane awa like a handfu o' ingan peelins on a windy day—that cursed battle o' Worcester settled a', an' left me without a groat, an' without as much grund as wad mak the hillock o' a moudiwart. But it's a' gane in a guid cause; I dinna begrudge't; and, besides, things 'll maybe come round again; an', if they dinna, there's nae help for't."

"So you were at the battle of Worcester, laird?" said the speaker's young friend.

"Feth! that I was, sir; and there," he added, holding out his right hand, which was minus the forefinger and thumb —"there's a certificate o' the truth o' my statement, gien under the hand o' ane o' Crum'll's praying dragoons. It was an ugly lick; but there were a hantle o' uglier anes than it gaun whar it was gotten. It was a coorse business a'thegither."

"It was no less, my good friend," said the young cavalier. "I was there too."

"Was ye, feth?" replied the laird. "Then, if ye was, sir, ye saw a bonny stramash—mair than ye'll forget in a hurry, I daur say. It was an awfu scene yon, when the dragoons cam in upon us in the streets o' Worcester. Od! they sliced an' slapped aboot them as if they had gotten into a plantation o' lang kale, an' no amang Christian men like themsels."

"It was, indeed, a sad business," replied the young man, with a melancholy smile. "Saw ye the King on that day?"

"I did," replied the laird.

"Wouldst know him again?"

"No; I canna think I wad. I just got a glisk o' him, for the first and last time, in the middle o' the dirdum at Worcester. When I saw him, the puir lad was fechtin like a Turk; but it was a' to nae purpose. He was obleeged to rin for't at last, an' to perk himsel up in a tree, like a hoolet, to keep oot o' the way o' Crum'll's sogers. If they had gotten the puir lad—as it was a God's mercy they didna—they wad hae taen aff his head, nae doot, as they did his unfortunate faither's; an' then, as, indeed, it's said they proposed to do, made a button-maker o' his sister, an' maybe a Spittalfields weaver o' his brither, the Duke o' Gloucester.

"I *have* heard," replied the young cavalier, with a contemptuous smile, while a blush of deep feeling, it might be indignation, overspread his intelligent countenance—"I have heard that some such idea was actually entertained by the Parliament as that thou hast just alluded to."

"There's nae doot that such a report was current, sir; but, whether true or no, I winna tak upon me to say. They may hae been belied in't."

"I hope they may," replied the young cavalier, musingly. Then, suddenly recovering himself, and assuming his usual cheerfulness of manner—"And what are the King's friends about in Scotland?" he said, slapping the laird good-humouredly on the knee.

"Dooms little, sir," replied the laird. "They daurna cheep. Monk has gotten his heel fairly on their necks; so that deil a ane o' them can wag either tongue or finger. There's a wheen o' them taen to the hills wi' Glencairn an' Balcarras—but what can they do? Naething. It's a puir thing to be in that way, sir. I had a trial o' that mysel. Tak my word for't, that sleepin in a moss hag, or in the lee o' a whin bush, an' leevin upon lavrocks, or raw turnips an' bog water, is nae better than it's ca'ed."

"Well, well, laird, I hope times will mend with our poor friends in Scotland," replied the young cavalier, to whom this picture of the sufferings of the royalists, notwithstanding the strong tincture it exhibited of the speaker's natural humour, seemed to give much pain. "I hope times will mend with them yet, and that feasting and feather beds will make them forget the raw turnips and whin bushes ye speak of. In the meantime, my good friend, push round the bottle, and let us talk of other matters; for these make me sad."

Nothing loath, the laird of Lucky's How filled up a brimming bumper, and drinking "better times," sent it down after some two or three dozen that had preceded it.

The party were now getting into high glee. The laugh, the joke, and the bottle went merrily round, and the merriest, and apparently the most jovial of the company, was the young gentleman whom we have hitherto represented as expressly attaching himself to the laird, and whose name, as the latter learned from himself, was Jones. This roysterer was the life and soul of the company, when roystering became the order of the evening; but his mirth was tempered with a gentleness of demeanour, and an air of polished hilarity, if such a phrase be permitted, as inspired the idea of the presence of a perfect gentleman. His whole manner, in short, was exceedingly captivating. His fancy was ready and playful; his wit brilliant and appropriate; and the affability and winning character of his smile irresistible. Altogether he was a most delightful companion, and admirably calculated to figure in such circumstances as those in which he was now placed. How he might acquit himself in a scene of a more grave and serious character, it would not perhaps have been easy to guess.

The mirth of the party in the kitchen of the Drouthsloken had just attained its height when a circumstance occurred which did not affect its hilarity, but somewhat changed its character. This was the entrance of two of the landlord's daughters. Dressed in the neat and simple, although somewhat peculiar costume of their country, with their hair tightly braided up, and bound with a broad silver frontlet, so as to exhibit in bold relief the contour of their full and fair countenances, two prettier girls than Juliana and Joan Vander Tromp were not within the walls of the Hague.

As they entered the kitchen, to which they had come merely, or, perhaps, we should have said ostensibly, to look after some household affairs, the girls curtsied slightly but gracefully to the company by which it was occupied, and, smiling pleasantly and good-naturedly the while, passed on to the upper end of the apartment, and began to occupy themselves in some little domestic duties. They had not, however, been permitted to enter unnoticed. On their appearance, the whole party got up from their seats, and acknowledged their presence by a gallant greeting; and in this courtesy Mr Jones again shone pre-eminent by the greater grace and deeper devotion he displayed in his chivalrous welcome to the fair visitors.

It might have been observed too that to him, in turn, were the courtesies and the looks also of the young ladies most especially directed; but in his case these were associated with a degree of respect for which it would not have been easy to account.

"What think ye of our fair Netherlanders, laird?" said Mr Jones to the latter, in a half whisper, when the ladies' attention was or seemed to be engrossed by their ocupation. "Will they not match your Scotch lasses, think you?"

"That's a pair o' braw queans, I maun allow," replied the laird. "Just twa as bonny bits o' lassocks as ane wad

wish to see; but I think they want the complexion — they haena the blume o' our kilted heather trampers. They want the caller red that the norlan breeze puts on the cheeks o' our Scottish gilpies. That's my hummle opinion, sir. But they're twa bonny lassocks for a' that. Nae doot o't."

"On the score of complexion I grant ye, laird, they are, perhaps, deficient a little, but I think this amply compensated by the intellectual expression, the fine contour, and the softer and more intense lustre of the eye. I have seen your Scottish maidens, laird, and admired them in my time."

"Faith, sir, I maun say your taste wad hae been very questionable if ye hadna," interposed the laird.

"When and whar saw ye them, if ye please, sir? What part o' Scotland was ye in?" he added.

The question appeared to place Jones in a difficulty for a moment; but he at length answered—

"Why, laird, I have been in many parts of Scotland in my day. I was with the King at Scone."

"Was that at the time o' his Coronation?" inquired the laird.

"It was," said Jones.

"And it wad be there, like, and aboot the quarter o' Perth, that ye saw our bonny Scotch lasses, I warrant," said the laird, laughingly. "'Od, if a' tales be true, the King admired them when he saw them, as muckle as ye could do, sir," continued the laird.

"Why, they do report something of that kind," replied Jones, with some confusion of manner, and slightly colouring as he spoke — indications of a feeling, whatever it was, which seemed highly edifying to his companions, who marked it with repeated bursts of laughter; "they do report something of the kind," said Jones; "but we mustn't credit all we hear, laird."

"The tae half's aboot the usual thing, I believe," replied the latter; "and, if we tak in the present case—that is, regarding the King's gallantries" ——

"Ay, ay, go on, laird, go on—that's it—give us all you know about the King's gallantries in Scotland," shouted, almost simultaneously, the other members of the party. "Go on, go on, like a good fellow."

"Nay, nay, now," exclaimed Jones, earnestly, but good-humouredly, "as one of the King's confidential servants, I must protest, laird, against your divulging anything of that kind in my presence."

"Never mind the protest—never mind the protest, laird. Go on, and we'll stand between you and the consequence," again shouted several members of the party. "What know ye about the King's gallantries at Scone?"

"Ou, it was nae great things after a' to mak a wark aboot; but ye see, there war a wheen unco godly ministers there at the time, an' they made an awfu ado aboot it. The hale affair was juist this. The King happenin to go into the room that he usually occupied in the palace o' Scone ae mornin earlier than ordinar, wha does he fin' sortin't oot but a bit bonny lassie o' a chaumermaid. Aweel, whan she saw the King enter, wham she hadna expeckit for at least an hour after, what does she do but mak a rin oot, as it war, and what does the King do but kep her, throw his arms aboot her neck, and gie her a hearty kiss—a reglar royal salute? And awa gaed the lassie, skirlin like a curlew, half mad wi' the fricht an' the honour. But what wad ye hae o't but that ane o' the Covenantin ministers, wha war then as thick as craws aboot Scune—it being juist like a rookery wi' the black coats for the time—suld be juist at the moment stanin at a window, in anither apartment that lookit richt into the ane whar the King had kissed the bit lassie, and saw the hale affair; and what does he do but report the scandal to his brethren, wha, shocked at the indecency, appointed a committee o' ministers to reprove the royal offender! This committee accordingly waited on the King, whan their spokesman, ane Douglas—an awfu stern man—after rebookin his Majesty, added, that it wad be prudent o' him, whan he desired to amuse himsel in future, to be mair carefu in shuttin the windows."

"Capital, laird, capital," shouted several of the party in convulsions of laughter. "Any more; any more?"

"Nay, nay, now, laird," said Jones, laughing, and clapping his hand on the mouth of the tell-tale; "on your allegiance to your lawful sovereign, I command ye to silence. He must not, in my presence, be made a subject of mirth to these idle jesters."

"Tuts, it's but a joke, man; but, if ye think it wad offend his Majesty, I'll say nae mair. I wad suner lose something considerable than do that. But what the waur can the King be o' its bein kent that he likes the lasses. I trow it's rather a feather in his kep than a discredit till him."

"Well done, laird!" exclaimed Jones, clapping the former jocosely on the shoulder. "Thou'rt a good old soul, and I shall take care that Charles knows of thy lenity towards his failings. It will do thee no harm with him."

Having said this, Jones rose from the table, and went towards the landlord's daughters, who were still busily occupied, or apparently so, at any rate, at the further end of the apartment. His approach to these fair damsels was made in the most gallant fashion imaginable, and with all the air and manner of a thorough-bred courtier and cavalier. What conversation passed between him and the girls was not overheard by the other members of the party; but the frequent bursts of laughter which were from time to time elicited, sufficiently shewed that it was of a mirthful character, and that the badinage of Jones fully supported in point and brilliancy the credit of his other kindred qualifications. After some time he returned to his party, and again took his seat beside the laird; who, on his doing so, remarked—

"Feth, sir, ye seem as guid a hand at botherin the lasses as your master. It's in the family, I think."

A roar of laughter succeeded this sally, to which Jones himself was one of the largest contributors; although it was certainly mingled with some embarrassment of manner. From this embarrassment, however, he was unexpectedly relieved by the strains of a wandering minstrel, which suddenly rose from the street, just underneath the window of the kitchen of the Drouthsloken. As these strains were of no ordinary excellence, they instantly attracted the attention of all in the apartment, inclusive of the landlord's two fair daughters, one of whom in especial, Juliana, evinced, by her flurried and agitated manner, a greater interest in the presence of the minstrel than would have been warranted on the supposition that it was merely accidental. Her confusion, however, and the consciousness which it implied of a knowledge exceeding that of those around her, passed undiscovered by all except Jones, whose more vigilant eye detected these symptoms of secret and mysterious understanding. He made no remark, however, on the subject; and carefully concealed his discovery, not only from the rest of the party, but from her who was the object of his mental speculations. Having concluded his serenade, or, at least, its first department, which consisted, first, of a preliminary flourish on a violin, executed with great spirit and felicity, and then of a song accompanied by the instrument, sung in a peculiarly deep-toned, but exceedingly melodious voice, the minstrel ceased for a few seconds, when Jones proposed that he should be invited in; and that, if he proved merely a gallant, he should be asked to a glass of wine; and if he turned out a professional performer, who came in the

exercise of his vocation, he should be requested to entertain them with his music within doors. To this proposal a general assent was at once given; and this assent was immediately followed by the proceeding proper to its fulfilment. Three or four of the party, headed by Jones, instantly rushed out, and surrounded the astonished minstrel before he was aware. At first he discovered symptoms of a desire to escape from the party; but, seeing this impossible, he stood his ground manfully, and awaited the pleasure of the gentlemen, whose notice, he said, he had the honour, it seemed, of so specially attracting. A momentary glance at the speaker satisfied Jones and his party of his quality. It was that of a professed street performer; or, at least, of a person of the humblest class, as was indicated by his apparel, which consisted of a short cloak, with a sort of coarse jerkin underneath, a pair of wide and ill-made knee breeches, coarse blue woollen stockings, and a pair of enormous wooden shoes. On his head was a brown felt hat, of a conical shape, adorned with a cock's feather, and altogether resembling those seen in paintings of Dutch boors. These outward indications, then, settled the question of the minstrel's rank, and rendered no ceremony necessary in inviting him in.

"You play well, friend," said Jones. "We have been listening to you, and will be glad if you will come and amuse us for half-an-hour or so. I will see to your being suitably recompensed."

"Thank you, honourable sirs," replied the minstrel. "I doubt not of my recompense, were it once earned; but the hour is late, and I may not tarry abroad longer. Moreover, I make it a rule never to enter any house, or to perform to any private party within doors. I bid you a good night, gentlemen."

"Nay, by my troth, and you do no such thing, friend," said Jones, seizing the minstrel, who was at this moment about making off, by the skirt of his jerkin. "We don't part with good company in this way. Friends," he said, addressing his companions, "lend a hand here, to secure the fiddler. We must compel him to his own interest, which he would thus wilfully neglect."

No sooner said than done. In a twinkling the reluctant minstrel was grasped on all sides, and in an instant after found himself in the centre of the kitchen of the Drouthsloken, to which he had been carried almost bodily, in despite of a certain quantum of vain resistance and remonstrance, by which he had at first endeavoured to thwart the purpose of his captors. On being brought into the light of the kitchen, it was discovered that the captured fiddler and songster was deficient of an eye, at least of the use of it, as it was covered by a large green shade, apparently unnecessarily large, as it concealed the half of his face. Another peculiarity was now also observable, and this was that the neck of his cloak was clasped at a most extraordinary height up on his face, and that he would by no means listen to any entreaties, either to lay aside the said cloak, or even to unloosen the clasp by which it was secured in so strange a position. We need scarcely add, that the effect of these various dispositions of his externals, was to conceal almost entirely his countenance, of which only a small portion of the left side was visible; and even this it was attempted to circumscribe as much as possible, by the disposition of the hair of the head, which was carefully combed down over the exposed space.

"Come now, friend," said Jones, addressing the musician, and handing him, at the same time, a huge brimmer of wine, "gulp this with a celerity that shall be creditable to thy craft, man, and let us have, thereafter, a taste of thy calling—some of thy merriest strains; for I mean to see if we cannot make a dance of it, by the help of these fair dames there"—inclining his head towards the landlord's daughters, who still kept their ground in the kitchen, although, if the matter had been inquired into, we rather fear they would have found some difficulty in naming the particular duty that detained them.

Finding it of no use to resist the spirit which he saw prevailed amongst the party, the minstrel quietly dispatched the contents of the goblet that had been presented to him, and commenced the duty that had been imposed upon him. On the first sound of the preliminary flourish of his bow becoming audible, Jones went up to the buxom daughters of Mynheer Tromp, and, in his most gallant manner, asked them if they would have any objection to take the floor with him and his friends, seeing that they had unexpectedly made the acquisition of an admirable musician, although, he must confess, rather an odd-looking man; and Jones, as he made the latter remark, looked slily at Juliana, to mark its effect, and found it acknowledged by a deep but transient blush, which she endeavoured to conceal.

The proposal, however, of a dance, was accepted, on the part of the younger sister Joan, with eager alacrity; and, on the part of Juliana, with an appearance of the same willingness, but with a confusion and hesitation of manner that gave token of a counteracting feeling. Having obtained the consent of the fair sisters to "tread a measure," the gay courtier took a hand of each, and gallantly led them to the middle of the floor; intimating, at the same time, by signal, to his friends to clear the floor for the impending performances—a signal which they lost no time in obeying; two or three seizing chairs a-piece; and other two or three—one of whom was the laird, who seemed to enter with great good-will into the spirit of the thing—lifting the table, with all it carried, to a distant corner of the apartment.

Just as these preparations were completed, and while Jones stood in the middle of the floor, doing the polite to his two ladies—but directing his attentions most especially to the elder—their father, the jolly Vander Tromp, who had been absent for a considerable time, entered the apartment, when, perceiving what was going on—

"Ah, very goot, very goot!" he said, in his most hilarous manner—his jolly, broad, red face beaming with delight. "A daunce, a daunce—ah, very goot thing a daunce"—and he cracked his finger and thumb, and threw up one of his huge legs in the air, with an expression of highly excited feeling. Then, calming down a moment—"You vill have no objection, Mynheer Jones, to my frow have share in the daunce?"

"Objection, Tromp!" ejaculated Jones, with well-feigned horror at the supposition. "By no means. I shall be but too proud of the honour."

"Ah, tank you, Mynheer Jones—you are too goot." And, saying this, Vander Tromp disappeared, with another joyous flourish of finger and thumb and left leg, in search of Mrs Tromp, to conduct her into the presence of the dancers, and to a share of their amusement.

In the meantime, the parties were set, and the dance commenced with great vigour; Jones displaying in this exercise a degree of skill and grace in entire keeping with the refinement of his general manner. His spirits, too, were exuberant, and infused a life into all around him, that all the other circumstances combined could not have inspired.

Although by no means wanting in attention to the younger lady, it might be observed, however, that Jones was much more assiduous in his civilities to Juliana; and, what was a yet more remarkable circumstance, it might also have been observed, that the musician evinced a strange sensation of uneasiness whenever he saw Jones paying any particular attention to this lady. He fidgeted in his seat, bungled the tune he was playing, and shot fiercer glances from his solitary optic, on the revellers on the floor, but most especially on Jones and his fair favourite. What was

odd, too, Jones seemed to be aware of the feeling he was exciting in the sensitive fiddler, and to delight in the uneasiness he was occasioning; for, the more markedly it was evinced, the more assiduous and persevering was he in his gallantries. Although, however, all this might have been sufficiently evident to a close and vigilant observer, it escaped the notice of those present; for Jones managed his secret tactics, whatever these were, with great caution, and exhibited no other symptoms of consciousness than a slight, scarcely perceptible, smile of sly intelligence.

We have said that none present were cognizant of this mysterious understanding, or rather misunderstanding, between Jones and the musician; but we are not sure that this is quite correct. There was an air of embarrassment about the manner of the fair Juliana, that seemed to indicate that she was also in possession of some share of the secret knowledge that was working so much underhand mischief; and of this Jones appeared likewise to be aware.

Thus stood matters, then, with this trio, when Vander Tromp and his wife—the former leading the latter on his arm—came tripping into the kitchen, with the grace and agility of a couple of elephants; for the worthy spouse of the worthy landlord of the Drouthsloken was, like himself, of the regular Dutch build, and had very much the shape and appearance of a feather-bed upon legs, if such an object can be conceived. Her breadth, which was naturally of the most formidable dimensions, was greatly increased by a stiff silk gown, which projected in rigid amplitude on all sides, and gave to her whole person an appearance of illimitable expanse. Notwithstanding of these vast dimensions, however, there was a comeliness about her bulk, and an expression of benevolence and good nature in her rosy countenance, that rendered her altogether by no means an unpleasing object.

On the entrance of mine host and his larger as well as better half, Jones, with that gallant devotion which seemed natural to him, instantly advanced towards the latter, and, with a preliminary flourish of some of his most graceful obeisances, in which, however, a very shrewd observer might have discovered a slight tincture of mock gallantry, invited her to join him in the next dance. The large lady, with a good-humoured smile, curtsied a ready acquiescence to the polite invitation; and, in the next instant, might be seen sailing majestically through the mazes of the dance, closely attended by her respectful and devoted partner.

In the meantime, the unwilling musician seemed heartily tired of his employment, and looked as if he would have given a trifle not only to have got quit of that employment, but to have got out of the house altogether. Jones, however, was inexorable; and the more marked the fiddler's impatience became, the more unmercifully did he deal out his orders to "play up;" and much did he seem to delight, although he kept the satisfaction to himself, in the grin of irritation which his commands never failed to produce on the countenance of the hapless musician. Leaving, then, the general position of matters in the kitchen of the Drouthsloken in this state, we shall resume the particular history of the laird's proceedings, which, we fear, the reader may think we have already too long neglected.

Of the ongoings of the evening, the laird, who was now pretty well in the wind, was an attentive, but by no means a silent spectator. In the enthusiasm which the proceedings passing before him had excited, he had mounted a chair, and from that elevated position was whooping, and yelling, and shouting, and clapping his hands—at once to express his own delight in the performances, and to encourage the performers.

"That's it, my bonny lassie!" he screamed out, addressing the younger Tromp, whose agility particularly pleased him. "'Od ye're juist doin amazinly! That's it! Kilt yer coats, ye cutty, and skelp at it withouten fear or dread! That's the true way to mak a figure on a flure!"

"Feth, no amiss, guidwife, no amiss ava," he said, and now addressing himself to the better half of mine host of the Drouthsloken, who was heaving like a seventy-four in a ground swell. "No amiss ava, considerin the wecht ye carry. Ye're just doin wonderfu' too, to be sae broad in the beam. My word, but ye are a sonsy lass," he continued, his attention gradually directing itself to a contemplation of her personal dimensions. "If ye're an unce, ye're twenty stane, quarry wecht; an' everybody kens that's no scrimpit, especially when ye're takin the nick."

"Weel dune, Jones! weel dune, laud! hoo, hurra! up wi't! Ye've a pair o' guid souple shanks o' your ain. That's it, laud!—that's it! Up wi't! hoo, hurra, hurra!" And the laird clapped his hands with a vigour and energy that emitted a sound more like the contact of a pair of boards than human palms; and accompanying this expression of heartiness of feeling, with whoops and shouts, that drowned the noise of both feet and fiddle.

Impartial in the distribution of his praises, the laird now directed his compliments to the various other members of the dancing party, severally, and finished with mine host himself.

"Unco weel, laird, unco weel," he exclaimed, addressing that worthy performer. "Really, unco weel! ye've a wonderfu' licht foot to hae sic a heavy stern. That's it, laird! Up wi' the left leg!—capital, capital!" And again the laird clapped his hands, and again raised his tremendous war-hoop.

Hitherto the dancers had paid no particular attention to the laird's noisy expressions of interest in their proceedings; but they so highly tickled Mr Jones, that, on the conclusion of the dance, he came laughing up to the laird, and asked him if he would not take a turn on the floor on the next occasion.

"No, thank ye, Mr Jones," replied the latter; "my dancin days are weel aboot owre now; but, though the flesh is weak, the spirit's willin, and, to mak mysel as guid company as possible, I'll tak a screed o' the fiddle an' ye like; for I'm mair souple aboot the elbows than the ancles now-a-days, and, besides, I dinna think that fallow puts the richt smeddum in his tunes. They're awfu draicky, and no like our Scotch measures, that mak ye fling your legs aboot like flails, till ye dinna ken whether your heels or your head's uppermost."

"Ah ha, very fair, laird," replied Jones, laughing; "and although I have reasons for keeping all relief from the fiddler as long as possible, I am so curious to hear your performance, that I, for my part, consent to your taking a turn of his instrument, provided he will allow you."

"We'll try him," replied the laird, briefly, and at the same time stepping down from his high place, and, thereafter, proceeding with Jones towards the musician of the evening, in order to offer his services in the way of assisting him

"Friend," said Jones to the one-eyed minstrel, while the laird stood behind, or rather beside him, waiting the result of his application—"friend, have you any objection to be relieved a little in your labours? Here is a brother musician, who would gladly take a turn with you, provided you would favour him with the loan of your instrument." The only reply of the fiddler was a sullen, dissentient growl; for he was as averse to speaking as to exposing his countenance.

"What! won't you lend our friend here your fiddle?" said Jones, now bursting out into a fit of suppressed laughter, which seemed, from its heartiness, and the relief which it evidently afforded him, to have been long pent up. "Do man, do—you had better do. *I'll* be much obliged to you"—with marked emphasis on the pronoun, which he further increased by a gentle but significant tread on the toe of the perplexed minstrel, who, after returning the secret

intimation of Jones by a smile and an intelligent leer of his open eye, handed the fiddle to the laird without saying a word.

The incident which we have just described was unobserved by any other party but those concerned in it; or, at least, if it was observed, it was not understood; and in this predicament, also, stood him who had the best opportunity of seeing it—namely, the laird. He saw all that passed between Jones and the fiddler; but he could not make out what it meant; nor did he seem to concern himself about discovering it. Having got the fiddle into his possession, the laird commenced tuning it with great assiduity, and with a bow stroke that shewed he was well practised in the use of the instrument. The tuning effected to his mind, he struck up, with great vigour, a ranting Scotch reel, which he played with uncommon spirit and skill. At first, the novelty of the measure took the greater part of the audience by surprise. For a time, they could make nothing of it. But music being a universal language, both the spirit and rythm of the tune soon began to be perceived and appreciated; and, with a little schooling from Jones, who seemed not only to understand the music, but to be delighted with it, the dancers were placed in the order of a reel; and, by a vigilant superintendence of their motions on the part of the latter, they contrived to get through the figure with tolerable correctness. All were delighted with the new dance. It was repeated again and again, and every time with increased success, and a diminishing necessity for the interference of Jones, who, having entered fully into the spirit of the mirthful train, whooped and yelled as vociferously as ever the laird had done. His enthusiasm was infectious; all caught it—even the broad-beamed wife of Vander Tromp, who moved under the inspiring influence of the laird's bow with an agility that no one could have believed her ponderous person capable of; while the others, including mine portly host himself, flung, and flew, and shuffled, as madly as the witches in the midnight dance in Alloway Kirk. The spell, in short, of the laird's music was complete, and all owned the hilarous spirit which it was so well calculated to diffuse over all who were within reach of its influence—in other words, over all who were within hearing of the laird's admirably-played fiddle. Inspired with additional glee by these indications of the powerful effect of his music, the laird still further heightened its influence by breaking out, as he played, into short, abrupt shouts, which were responded to, from time to time, by the male dancers, but with most especial emphasis by Jones, who seemed to be, altogether, at the very acme of human enjoyment.

It was while the revellers were thus dinning the drowsy ear of night with their obstreperous mirth, and while they were yet in the full career of enjoyment, that four persons suddenly entered the kitchen of the Drouthsloken. They were in the garb of seamen, wearing large, shaggy, pea-jackets, and low, round-crowned, glazed hats, with circular flaps projecting behind. Although, however, all were dressed nearly alike, there was one who evidently took the lead amongst them. He was a young man, and had an air of authority in his manner to which the rest seemed to pay deference. Some differences, too, in his outer habiliments, notwithstanding of the general resemblance that prevailed in this particular, pointed him out as of a superior grade to the others. This person was not unknown to the inmates of the house. He was recognised as Captain Hagedorn of the Jungfrau of Rotterdam—a man of fierce, irascible temper, and an ardent, although not very acceptable admirer of Juliana. On his entrance, therefore, he was immediately greeted as an acquaintance by Tromp, his wife, and their two daughters—by Juliana, however, with an evident confusion and embarrassment of manner. To these greetings, Hagedorn vouchsafed the return only of a surly and unintelligible muttering, while he proceeded to provide himself with a chair, on which he placed himself directly opposite the one-eyed minstrel, at whom he threw, from time to time, looks of the most malignant ferocity.

All, especially Juliana, who had reasons for fearing the worst, seemed impressed with the belief that the fellow was bent on mischief, and that he had come there for the especial purpose. Of this they were more convinced, on observing the brass-tipped sheaths of cutlasses projecting from beneath the pea-jackets of the intruders. Their fears were not long of being realised.

"Tromp," said Hagedorn, (we take the liberty of translating, in this, and all other similar cases,) "I thought you kept a regular, decent house. Such is the character you pretend to, at any rate."

"And such," replied Tromp, with a blush of honest indignation, "is the character I maintain Who shall gainsay it?"

"Why, there are some things going on here to-night that don't look much like it," replied Hagedorn. "Know ye, Tromp, or does Juliana know, who this one-eyed gallant is?" pointing to the late serenader.

"Whether they do or not, they shall soon know, and so shall you to your cost, Hagedorn!" replied the minstrel, starting to his feet, and hastily stripping off the disguise, eye-patch and all, in which he was enveloped; a proceeding which discovered to the astonished onlookers—not, however, including either Jones or Juliana, who had a previous knowledge of his identity—a tall, handsome, gentlemanly looking young man, well known as Sir Lionel Musgrave, one of the gayest and most respected of those English gentlemen who shared the misfortunes and exile of Charles II. during the existence of the Commonwealth.

"Ha!" said Hagedorn, starting to his feet, on Musg ave discovering himself, "So, I have unearthed the fox, eh!" And, as he spoke, he made a grasp at Musgrave's throat; which the latter evaded by adroitly stepping back a pace, when he instantly drew his sword and made a pass at Hagedorn, who, however, skilfully warded it off with his cutlass, to which he had had recourse the moment he missed his hold of his antagonist. These proceedings were, of course, a signal to all the other men in the apartment to muster on their respective sides; and this they instantly did. Hagedorn's men immediately drew, Jones and his party did the same, and the women ran screaming from the scene of the impending contest. In one instant after, a general melée commenced. There were deep oaths, overturning of tables, and clashing of swords in every direction, and all the other characteristics of a tremendous and very serious hubbub. Blows, too, were not wanting. They fell thick and fast on all sides.

Hitherto our friend the laird had remained an idle, but sufficiently astonished spectator of the strange and sudden scene that had been thus brought before his visual organs. Though an idle, he was not altogether, however, a mute witness of the proceedings that were going forward.

"'Od! this *is* a queer business!" he muttered to himself. "Wha on earth wad hae thocht it that yon blin ee'd, broken doon lookin soul o' a fiddler wad hae turned oot a braw young swanky like that? Na, na, that'll no do," suddenly added the laird, and now referring to the circumstance of Jones being hard-pressed by two of the intruders. "Twa on ane—that'll never do." And the laird looked around him for some weapon wherewith he might compensate the odds against his friend. Nothing of this kind more efficient than the tongs presenting itself, the laird leaped down from the table on which he had been perched in the quality of musician, and, seizing the afore-mentioned instrument by the feet, advanced upon the foe, shouting—"Staun to them,

Jones! staun to them, lad! till I gie them a taste o' the taings!" And in the same instant he discharged a blow at the head of one of Jones' assailants that laid him senseless on the floor. Finding his first effort so successful, the laird repeated the experiment on the prostrate man's companion with precisely the same result. Down he went also with a fractured skull. "That's the way!" shouted the laird, now greatly excited by his own destructive exertions; "ca' them doon like nine-pins! Soop them aff the face o' the yearth!"

At this moment the laird's Io Pæans were interrupted by the entrance of a party of the town-guard, whom Tromp had summoned to his aid. These immediately seized on the intruders, as they were pointed out by the latter—the fallen men having so far recovered as to be now sitting up, although evidently sick and giddy from the effects of the laird's blows, and looking, as he said himself, "unco white aboot the gills" —and marched them off to the guard-house, to answer in due time to the judicial authorities of the city for the breach of the peace of which they had been guilty.

On the kitchen of the Drouthsloken being cleared of the enemy, an investigation into the extent of personal injury sustained took place, when it was found that this was, after all, very trivial, consisting only of two or three slight flesh wounds, of which Musgrave bore two, and one or two others one a-piece.

"And now, laird," said Jones, addressing the latter, "what share of the honours have you got?"

"Deil a scratch," replied the laird. "Faith, I didna gie them time for that. I didna staun whilly-whain wi' them, wi' a bit shabble in my haun, as ye a' did, but gie'd them richt knock-me-doon thuds at ance—sent them owre like stots, ane after the ither. Faith! commen me to a pair o' tangs in a kitchen row. It maks clean wark. I'll think mair o' them as a weapon, baith o' offence and defence, than ever I did."

"In such hands as yours, laird, they certainly are a sufficiently formidable weapon. Had it not been for them and you together, I would scarce have got off so skaithless as I have done. I owe you a good turn, and it shall not be forgotten. I promised you an introduction to the King; and I shall not only fulfil that promise, but, as my word goes a long way with him, I shall give such an account of you as, I answer for it, will insure you a favourable reception, and probably procure you some still more substantial tokens of his regard."

"Ou, thank ye, sir, thank ye," said the laird; "but I dinna see that I hae dune onything the nicht that should entitle me to ony special favour frae his most gracious Majesty. What interest can he possibly hae in a kitchen collyshangy like this?"

"More than you're aware of, perhaps, laird; but never mind that in the meantime. Here comes Tromp to read us a lecture, I daresay, on the evening's occurrences, although it was none of our fault either. Ha, Musgrave, my spark!" continued Jones, and now turning to that gallant—"didst think I couldn't have known thee? 'Ods fish, man, I would have known the cut of thy jib, although thou hadst been sewn in a sack."

"Faith, your" —— A wink from James prevented the word that was about to follow. The wink was understood. "Faith, my friend," said Musgrave, laughing, "to tell a truth, I had no idea you were here. It was intended for a stolen march—to see whether I could not win my wager by cutting ye out in the good graces of our landlord's fair daughter, July." The conversation between Jones and Musgrave was here interrupted by the approach of Tromp, who came not, as the latter had suspected, to complain of what had occurred, but merely to request that the gentlemen would now retire, as it was getting late, and as his household was in a state of great alarm and confusion, in consequence of what had taken place.

The request was too respectfully made, and in itself too reasonable to admit of the smallest objection. The party immediately donned their hats and cloaks, when Jones, taking the laird by the hand, told him to remain where he was for the night, and that he would wait upon him on the following morning, to conduct him to the King.

Agreeably to his promise, early in the forenoon of the following day, Jones, attended by a gay band of cavaliers, entered the apartment in which the laird was at breakfast.

"Oh, Mr. Jones, hoo are ye?" said the latter, rising from his seat on the entrance of the former. "I'm sure this is very guid o' ye. Nane the waur o' the bit stramash we had last nicht, I hope?"

"Oh! not a bit, not a bit, kind thanks to you for that, laird," replied Jones. "Now, my friend," continued the latter, "I am better than my word: I promised to bring you to the King; instead of this, I have brought the King to you. Any objection, laird, to take me for your lawful, but unfortunate King? I am Charles," he said, in a tone of more earnest emphasis.

Need we describe the laird's amazement at this astounding disclosure? We need not. The reader will conceive it. Although he looked unutterable things, all that he said was—

"Gude preserve me? is that a fact?" pronounced in the slow, deliberate tone of overwhelming and perplexed amazement.

The sequel of our tale is soon told. Charles settled a small pension on the laird—all that his circumstances at the time would afford—on which he lived for several years at the Hague. He subsequently found his way back to Scotland, the distracted state of the King's affairs preventing the regular payment of his pension. In the meantime years rolled on, and changes took place, and amongst these came the Restoration. Charles was restored to the throne of his ancestors. On this throne the Monarch had not been many days seated, when he was informed by one of the pages in waiting that they had been much annoyed by an old grey-headed Scotchman, with a large flat blue bonnet on his head, insisting on admission to his Majesty's presence.

"Did he give his name?" inquired the Monarch.

"He did, please your Majesty," replied the page; "he said he was sure that, if we would inform your Majesty that it was the laird of Lucky's How who sought admission, your Majesty would instantly grant him an audience."

"He was right," said Charles, smiling. "I recollect the honest man well. Admit him next time he presents himself."

The laird came, was admitted, and was received with a most cordial welcome by the good-natured Monarch. They talked over the occurrences of the evening they had spent in the kitchen of the Drouthsloken; and the laird was finally dismissed, with a promise, shortly afterwards redeemed, of being reinstated in his patrimonial lands. To this other gratuities were added, to an amount that amply compensated him, as he often himself said, for all that he had suffered in the royal cause. Some will say, perhaps, and with too much truth, that Charles was not so grateful to all his friends; but in the present instance we have only to do with the case of the laird of Lucky's How.

WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

GUSTAVUS M'IVER.

In a little house in the Canongate of Edinburgh, there lived, not very long ago, Mr Gustavus M'Iver—(for he never would allow himself to be called Ensign M'Iver, though that was his proper professional designation)—as good a man as ever God put breath in, and as faithful a soldier as ever Lord Wellington commanded in the Peninsula. That is, doubtless, no small praise to one conceived in sin and brought forth in iniquity; and heaven knows, if it were not as true as Jove's oath, it would never have been awarded by us. But he was remarkable in other respects than being honest; for he was six feet five without the aid of sock or buskin; and, if any man were to say that he was not four feet from acromion to acromion, he would assuredly be a big liar. But it is the head and face of a man that we like to look at; for, after all, what signifies (except in a warlike view, and ours is a peaceable one) a cart-load of mere bone and muscle, bound together with thick whangs of gristle, and yielding nothing but brute force, if it be not surmounted by a good microcosm of a head, with a good dial plate to let a man know what is going on within. Do we not see every day great clocks put on the tops of big steeples, and yet, though they are nearer the sun than the little time-piece with the deuce a body at all, they go like an intermitting fever, telling us at one time that we are hurrying to the grave, and at another, that time has nothing to do with us at all. So is it with men; and, for our part, we could never discover any proper legitimate sympathetic accordance between the trunk and cranium of mortals, any more than if (like pins) they had been made in pieces, and one head clapped on a body just as the occipital condyles suited the straps of muscles to which they are attached. This opinion is well justified by the example of the subject of our story; for, while the big limbs of him seemed to set at defiance all regular laws of motion, either horizontal or perpendicular, going, as one might say without a parodox, wherever and however they chose, his head was as methodical as that of a drill sergeant, and the like of him for regularity might not be seen from Lerwick to Berwick. Nor was his face ever known to be at fault as a faithful indicator; and verily there was no great wonder in that, for nothing short of the cerebral pulleys he carried in his brain could ever have moved a single hair-breadth up or down, to the right or to the left, the big jaw-bone which he seldom condescended to impart any living motion to, except at meal times, or when (and that occurred very seldom) he had an idea to express sufficient in size and importance to warrant such an excess of muscular labour.

We have said that Gustavus M'Iver had been in the Peninsula; and we may be believed or not, just as suits the reader's credulity with our credibility; but he was a luckless wight who dared to doubt that fact in the personal presence of the hero himself; better by far he had been at St Sebastian, for the never a one we ever heard of, that had the temerity to express any scepticism on the point that did not live to repent it. There can be no doubt, however, on the subject; for Gustavus was not only in the Peninsula, but he fought there very well; and no great thanks to him either, for he had the entire charge of the mess—a post of honour he had acquired from an indisputable superiority in culinary lore, and a most indefatigable perseverance as well as an unexampled adroitness in the art of carving both for himself and others. The praise he got for fighting was, in so far as regarded the immense heaps of hungry Frenchmen he hewed down with his falchion, true enough; the bulletin writer recorded the fact just as it was reported to him, that the great Goliath Gustavus did actually perform very wonderful feats of sheer killing; and we cannot help thinking, notwithstanding of the sneers of his brother officers, that it would not have become the dignity of a dispatch to have made any allusion whatever to the manner in which he had kept up his body and his courage.

When the war was done, he came home filled with glory; and as, when the world speaks of a man, it is unnecessary for him to speak of himself, he seldom (for he was a sensible man) ever thought of speaking either of himself or any other person or thing. Conceit is the fountain of speech; and where a man is filled to the very throat with glory, there is little occasion for him ever opening his mouth; and therefore it was that Gustavus, in addition to his other peculiarities, seldom deigned to hold converse with the creatures of the earth, unless it were in his capacity of paymaster of pensions, (an office his prowess had secured to him,) when he was compelled to speak, to make others hold their tongues—an operation in which he succeeded to a miracle, from the accumulated load of authority he derived from his silence.

Now, it happened that this same Gustavus, after almost all the sap of his body had been eliminated by fighting, and there seemed to be scarcely enough left to lubricate the tough gaunt muscles that stretched from promontory to point of his big bones, like tough hausers, took it into his head to wish for a wife. We doubt if all the physiologists or psychologists that ever hunted for traces of the spirit among the white guts of the head could tell how such an idea came into such an extraordinary place; and if his heart was as dry as the voluntary muscles of his body, nothing short of a dislocation of Cupid's right arm could ever have sent into such a leathery organ the tickling shaft. True, however, it is as death, that Gustavus did actually fall in love, and the symptoms were just as extraordinary as the passion itself; for there never was heard in any man's lungs before, such a rattle of sighs; and as for the length of his jaws, the never a rough wood-cut of John Bunyan's hero in the Slough of Despond could come within many degrees of their lugubrious longitude. It is even true, that the power of the tender passion reached to his stomach—a place of all others that might *a priori* have been considered perfectly independent of all moral impulses whatsomever. Nothing before, except hunger itself, had ever affected that organ; and indeed, esconced behind and between, and beneath such ribs and muscles, nothing short of death itself might have been supposed capable of reaching it, or subduing its tough hide, its viscous linings, and its gastric juice, stronger than the best gin that ever was made at Schiedam.

Now the *petit bel chose* that had thus produced such an

effect upon the moral and physical economy of this big son of Mars, was no other than a mere toy of a thing—a little milliner called Julia Briggs—scarcely so big, when divested of the padding and stuffing with which her art enabled her to supply her deficiency of natural size, as one of his huge limbs. But this may be no manner of marvel to those who are versant in the mysteries of love, who, being himself a small creature, seems to delight in throwing into the smallest of his victims the greatest portion of his power. It is difficult to see philosophically any final cause in the curious fact in nature; but surely, the never a man, who has any observation in him, will deny, that pigmy beauties and colossal swains (and *vice versa*) have a singular power of producing in each other the tender passion. It may be owing to nature's love of the *juste milieu*, that thus induces her to take this mode of keeping up a reasonable *mean size* among human creatures, or it may be any one of a thousand other speculations; but what care we for such theories, when we have the fact to state as an undoubted truth, that Gustavus fell in love with Julia Briggs, as standing, like a mighty Anak, in the Canongate of Edinburgh, he saw the little creature skipping along, twisting her little limbs as if she would have dislocated her joints in her efforts to appear graceful in the eyes of mankind generally, and in those of the gigantic Gustavus, whom she had often seen looking after her, in particular! Successful beyond any prior example of her wriggling evolution of her graces, the little baggage—as quick in her eye as ever were Pip, Trip, or Skip, the maids of honour (according to Drayton) of Queen Mab—saw at once that she had hit the proper twirl and twinkle, at last, that would subdue the involuntary muscle that had so long been useless beneath the ribs of the great Gustavus. The moment the effect was produced, the tough sinews of his body began to move, and away he stalked after her, with strides as long as the whole height *a capite ad calcem* of the quarry upon which he intended to pounce. It spoke well of the power of "her harness of gossamer," that it stood the tug of so huge a victim; and, as she turned her twinkling eye to observe the triumph of her power, she did not fail to rivet the chains by some higher displays of graceful contortion, that made his eyeballs roll in the large sockets, as if he had seen a hobgoblin, in place of Julia Briggs, the *petite marchande de modes*.

This was just as good a beginning as ever a sly man-catcher essayed in the world of love, since the days of Helen; and the arch kidnapper knew very well how to follow up her wile; for, after displaying, by a proper caper, as much of her ancle as would do the business, she skipped away, as nimbly as a Nymphidia in the service of Oberon's queen, and was not again seen till she opened the window of her mother's house, and displayed herself, capless and coifless, to her staring admirer. The capture was now completed. Jove himself was never more completely entoiled by the chains of the little baggage Iynge; and, during the whole of that day, Gustavus strode along the pavement, opposite the window of his charmer, as if he had been on duty before a besieged city. He had just as little power to walk away, as he had to circumscribe his step to the ordinary measure of God's creatures; every stride occupying, at least, four feet of pavement, and being executed so regularly and methodically, that one step did not differ from another by a single inch. But it is a mere bagatelle to describe these pendulous movements, produced, for the first time, by the spirit of love; while, to execute with truth a faithful picture of the painful contortions of a countenance originally formed a wood-cut of extraordinary dimensions, and now under the soft, melting influence of the tenderest of passions, would require a goosequill, owning no less an influence than the spirit of an immortal genius. As the loves of some of the inferior animals are expressed by sounds and signs that seem to indicate nothing but fierce war, so might the demonstrations of this extraordinary affair of the heart, exhibited through the grotesque motions of muscles that had been as rigid as dried leather for twenty years, be looked upon as anything rather than signs of the languishing passion which, as Augustin says, will make a musician out of an ass. Yet, doubtless, there was, both in his goggle-eyes and lengthened jaws, an expression that was intended for softness and languishment; and it is not impossible, that, if one had been apprized *a priori* of the intention, he might have discovered in the ludicrous gesticulations some resemblance to at least a burlesque of what is only a very ridiculous exhibition at the very best.

Love that is long acoming, comes at last with a terrible onset—overturning all sense and prudence, kicking up the heels of all forms of etiquette, and removing every impediment to its progress. It is but a very small matter to say, that Gustavus could not sleep under the hug or embrace of the new customer that had taken such a violent hold of his heart, though we do not deem it an equally insignificant announcement, that a man who could swallow a couple of pounds of flesh at a down-sitting, should lose his gustative and digestive powers to such an extent that the knocking of his heart sounded audibly through his empty stomach, as if it had been a whispering gallery. But love is a leveller in more senses than the vulgar one; and the only circumstance about the matter of this particular case at all remarkable, was, that such effects, upon a body iron-bound as it was, and of such gigantic proportions, should have been produced by an agent of such truly insignificant dimensions. A resolute disciplinarian, however, at all points, without a single qualm of fear or doubt, and accustomed to attack a city or a haunch of beef with equal *sang froid*, the love-smitten victim, on the third day after his seizure, drew up his huge limbs to their full extent, till he seemed like the Colossus of Rhodes, and settled the whole affair by one resolute gnash of his under maxillary bone. Two strides took him to the door, one or two more brought him down stairs to the street, and the never a man that stalked off ground that was to be his own, went along with such strides as he used in making his way to the house of Julia Briggs. With one solitary idea in his head, and one word on his tongue—though there was room for a thousand—he went direct up to the door, knocked, like one of Froissard's warriors at the barricades, was admitted, turned off the momentous question of marriage by one heavy lurch of his jaw, and settled a matter that danglers take years about in the space of time that a thirsty Bacchanalian would occupy in taking a long pull of jolly good ale.

In the week afterwards, the couple were united in the holy bands of matrimony; and, surely, to say that there was any ceremony about such a union, would be a burlesque of the mysteries of Hymen. Yet, rapid as were the movements, and wholesale the conclusion, no man ever put his neck in the noose with such imperturbable gravity, for, during the whole period occupied by the feast, which was in the form of a supper, no man could have observed in his gaunt face any one of the three laughs, Ionic, Megaric, or Sardonic, with which the muscles of the face are usually convulsed; the only indication approaching to a cachination in the midst of the whoops and yells of the feasters, being a grin in the shape of a *risus Agacis*, that marked all power of analysis. But even this caricature of a display of good humour, insignificant as it may seem, shewed to those who knew the man that he was labouring under the influence of some extraordinary emotion, as nothing of the kind had ever been seen in his countenance since the day on which he hewed down so unmercifully the French at St Sebastian. Nor, on the following day, when he had fairly entered upon the supreme happiness

of the married state, was there seen any palpable sign of the joy that, of course, penetrated through all his well-mailed thoracic viscera—unless it were, perhaps, that his face had even increased in length, and the leathery aspect of all the "celestial index" of the soul was, if possible, more grim than ever.

The getting of a wife is, after all, but a very small matter in comparison of the ruling of her; and sure, if ever there was a man in the world, since the days of the grim Hercules, who bungled the matter out and out, that had any chance of subjecting his wife to the requisite thraldom and subordination, Gustavus was that man; for a look of him was enough to tame a Bucephalus any day; and it was evident that he cogitated mighty achievements in that way, if one might have judged from the marshalling character of his step as he paraded the house; his taciturnity, deeper than the wells of truth; and the air of a resolute importance that was enthroned among the deep furrows of his extraordinary countenance. The first fruits of his study—and verily he must have been a man of no common nerve that could study during the honeymoon—was the important conclusion that the sooner his Julia was entoiled in the multifarious affairs of domestic economy, and the imperative duties of ministering to his every want and comfort, the better chance he enjoyed of subjecting her thoroughly to the power of his stern discipline. So straight began he, accordingly, upon the instant, and, by the aid of a small douceur, got quit of his servant—an act that savoured of extraordinary sagacity and wisdom, in so much as it involved the additional advantages of saving her wages, and keeping and turning his wife into a source of profit, as she would doubtless be the fountain of much delectation. It is not unlikely that the maxim, when the devil finds a man or woman idle, he straightway sets them aworking—or, as Erasmus expresses it, *Ocium ad omnem nequitiam impellit*—had a large share in this determination; for, as to the opinion of Shakspeare, that idleness is the source of love, he despised it hepatically, and calculated with certainty that love's sweetest labour—the contributing to the comfort of her lord—would be diligently pursued by his beloved and most adorable Julia Briggs.

All this was just as fair a piece of human calculation, and as probable a conclusion, as could ever be found beyond the regions of pure mathematics; and so, placing every fibre of his big body, excepting some portion of the heart, under the rigid authority of the genius of command, he issued, with an air a deuced deal more martial than marital, his stern orders, which were as recondite as they were energetic—going into the very medullary *penetralia* of the matter of cooking and housekeeping with a knowledge and consideration that would have done honour to Mrs Margaret Dods of the Cleikum Inn herself. Nor was this to be much wondered at; for, had he himself not washed and dressed in the Peninsula, and had he not there also foraged, and cooked, and swallowed as no *bon vivan* ever did before, since the days of the three Apicii? The never a man had ever doubted it; and if he had, it would just have been as safe for the unhappy wretch to have disputed his courage as to have expressed one word of scepticism on a subject that so nearly concerned his honour—for, in either case, he would have been knocked down.

It would be a libel on womankind to say, that the *polite* Julia, who had been a standing toast among the small men of fashion connected with the depots of millinery wares about the town, had any affection for the bareboned Colossus she had wedded on a week's notice; and it would have been an insult to her spirit to have said that she feared him, though he was at least three times the size of any of her former lovers. She had married him, as all women of her stamp do, just for a living and protection—the one to be afforded from his pay, and the other from his bones and sinews—a very fair calculation for a woman of so small a calibre to make; and, accordingly, she would have declared war against him at once, big and terrible as he was, if she could have seen any good to come of it; for, as to the fearful expression of his leather-bound jaws, when he issued the order for work, she cared no more for it than if it had been a smile of mawkish love-doting. It is not likely that she had ever heard of Omphale, who ruled the biggest man of the world by her slipper; but she had not thrown away the needle, which had been used on the linens of fair, personable men, to take it up again to sew for a husband that never was intended by nature to be loved; and, as for supplying its place with the spit, she looked upon the proposition with as much contempt as she would have bestowed on a proposal that she should love the gigantic caricature she had married for nothing else in the world but her own convenience. All that was as plain as noonday; but open war was not her tact, any more than it is the tact of Puck to fight the regular Goliaths of the earth at a fair stand-up or monomachy; and it is scarcely neccessary to say, that the open *duellum* is no more relished by the women of her class generally, than it was by the "eel or deil" of a creature that Gustavus had raised to the high station of his wife. Nor had she any difficulty in fixing on her plans; for nature was just as kind to her as to the rest of her sex in suggesting the means of perplexing her lord, though it is not improbable that, if she had known that his intention in making her work was to keep her out of all that species of devilry that comes to women out of idleness, she might have been inclined to vindicate the nobility of her kind, by some more devilish trick than mere unaided nature might at first have prompted.

The sharp vixen-eye of the pigmy sempstress had not been slow in perceiving, that the two grand *sine quibus non* of her husband's comfort, were pure linens and well cooked victuals; and she knew, moreover—doubtless in the way by which the sex come to their secret knowledge of men's ways—that he had been in the habit of securing these grand objects by the labour of his own hands. The antipodes of each other in everything, they were as unlike each other in respect of these domestic duties, as they were in the sizes of their bodies; for, while, as has been already hinted, there never was a man since the days of Pope Joan that excelled more in the mysteries of washing, dressing, and cooking than Gustavus, there never was a woman that knew less of these recondite arts than Mrs Julia M'Iver. The sexes of the two should, therefore, clearly have been reversed—he should have been the wife, and she the husband; and Julia knew this just as well as we or any other individual who presumes to question the excellence of the laws that regulate matrimonial matches, when she resolved to bring about a state of matters that would just be the same as if the potentiality we have mentioned had just in fact been a reality. She accordingly began by spoiling every piece of domestic labour to which she applied her hands; his linens being as much of the tint of saffron as ever were those of a garreteer, who enjoys the luxury of a pole and rope put forth from a skylight; and his victuals as wretchedly dressed as ever a devil-sent cook in the kingdom could have mangled out of the fair gifts of nature. Nothing in the way of destruction could have been more skilfully managed; and it is not too much to say, that, though the fair Julia had lifted her delicate hand, and attempted to knock him down, or performed any of the other *culpæ gravissimæ* that appertain to the privileges of the sex, she could not have more effectually roused the wrath of the mighty Gustavus.

Had he been a reasonable man, he might have set about supplying, in a rational way, the deficiency of domestic lore which his Julia thus lamentably discovered; but, unfortunately, his pride of the perfectibility of his own knowledge

of these occult mysteries was called in question at the very time that his anger was roused by a fault the most heinous of any beyond the pale of the decalogue. With a look of terrible scorn, in which all the gristly muscles of his grim face were called into a grotesque convulsive motion, he announced, in as much of a paucity of vocables, and as loud a sound as ever the stentorian Cycloborus, expressed his settled determination to take the sovereignty of the kitchen on his own shoulders; and no one could have heard the sound and seen his countenance without believing that it was just as sure as death or sin that he would do as he said he would do. At least, there can be no manner of doubt that Mrs Julia M'Iver believed him, and it was equally doubtless that she did not fear him. She smiled at the success of her scheme, and the smile itself would have done the business of confirmations, if there had been any need of such aid in the matter. So, accordingly, the apparition was soon afterwards exhibited, of the great bibbed Gustavus striding about in the kitchen, and performing *manibus suis* all the operations of the culinary department of his domestic economy; and we would tell a big untruth, or be guilty of misprision itself, if we attempted to conceal the fact, that he washed and dressed his own linens as well as, if not a deuced deal better, than any washerwoman that ever danced in a trough in the village of Duddingstone.

When Hercules laid down his club, and took off his lion's skin, and received from the hands of his mistress the spindle and distaff, the big warrior did no more than many a better man has done when he resigns himself to the dominion of love; but no love on earth would ever have made Gustavus M'Iver take upon himself the duties of a woman. He did it from a sheer love of good-eating and clean linens—ay, and he persevered in it too, though he saw, as plain as palpable physics, that (what he dreaded) his *petite* Julia would become a prey to the harpies of indolence. And, to be sure, the ordinary consequences very soon began to shew themselves; for, where there was no love, and no work to occupy the mind, and plenty of well-dressed victuals to fill the stomach, Mrs M'Iver was, in every respect, a lady at large, and, a lady at large being synonymous with a lady in danger, she fell into habits of going abroad, and calling, and gossiping, and sipping, and tasting, till she became as big a drunkard as ever was seen out of the county town of Horrestia. Yet, still true to her character, she feared Gustavus nothing—no more than she did the good whisky which she swallowed in choppins; and this fortitude made the mischief ten times greater than it would otherwise have been; for, terror being the fulcrum of law and amendment, there might have been some hope of her if she had not enconced herself behind the noblest of all the cardinal virtues—true blue courage. Though a *petite marchande de modes*, and unable or unwilling to cook a dinner or dress a shirt, Mrs Julia M'Iver knew the rights of her sex just as well as the "guid wife of Auchtermuchty" herself—she knew that Gustavus had no right to turn her away without supporting her, and he could not beat her without subjecting himself to the horn of a summons of separation and aliment; so, upon the whole, she had grounds for her fearlessness, which would have supported her though she had had never a particle of true heroism from the mother of every one of us.

Few women whom fame has immortalized, have done so much as was achieved by this little heroine; for she had already made a giant her cook and servant, and now she forced him to become her nurse, when she chose to be sick from the effects of intemperance. A more complete reversal of all the reciprocal duties of husband and wife, had never been achieved by woman; and it was in vain that Gustavus looked more grim and gaunt than ever—that he even condescended to *argue* upon the subject—a thing he had never before done in his life, and of which, in truth, he was deemed totally incapable. He still loved the wicked imp, and she knew he loved her—and what more was required to account for the fearless perverseness on the one side and the submission on the other? But what was he now to do? It was comparatively mere pastime to cook or to wash, or even to nurse the sick Julia, when her illness overcame his resentment; but the thought that the grand qualities and faculties of a man who had commanded and killed in his day, and whose very look spread terror around him, were to be brought down to subserve the mere purpose of ministering to one of the smallest of women that ever drew breath, and one of the greatest drunkards that ever drank whisky, was surely enough to make an ordinary man mad. If the difficulty was to be resolved at all, it could be only by cogitation; and so straightway he set about a process of thinking—an operation of marvellous difficulty to him, as might have been manifestly seen by the length of his stride and of his face, as he paced backwards and forwards—his apron, a species of mail he donned every morning before he began his operations, shaking and rattling among his huge limbs like a mainsail in a gale of wind. And, to be sure, his was not altogether a barren cogitation, as might have been both seen and heard in the loud thunder of his hand on the table, as he muttered his resolution to stop the supplies. He never failed to act upon a thought; for the thing was too difficult to be got, to be lost for want of use, and, accordingly, the supplies were stopped; but what was that to Julia Briggs, so long as he had any credit in the town, or she had any clothes on her back? Julia got intoxicated as regularly as ever she had done before, and demanded imperiously his ministrations as nurse, with the same *sang froid*, or rather pertness, that formed a part of her cardinal courage. His cogitations had gone for nothing; and again the painful duty of pondering and devising, was forced upon the thick viscous intestines of his gigantic head. Again he perambulated the house from room to kitchen, sometimes brandishing like a sword a spit or skewer, in the mental absence produced by the effect to think; and he caught at last—what he laboured for—a cure for Julia's habits of drinking; and he acted upon it again as manfully as before; for he locked her up, and the devil a chum, or gossip, or pot-companion could approach her; but he forgot that there was such an aperture as a window in a house, or a mouth in a woman, and the first thing that assailed his ears was the cry of Julia for constables to give her the liberty that our great country has awarded as a boon to all natural-born subjects of the realm. Nor was so just an appeal vain; for authorities and neighbours interfered in behalf of the prisoner; and Gustavus was told to his teeth that he had not a jot of right to imprison his wife; whereupon she was released, and the evening of the same day saw her, under the effects of the jubilee of her emancipation, more intoxicated than he had yet ever beheld her. Again was the rusty machinery of his intellect set in motion, and the result was a device that distanced the former experiments, as well for its ingenuity as its chance of success. He had heard of women being *satiated* with liquor; and so he put in her power ten times more than ever it was in the capability of woman to swallow—an act that was accompanied by something in the shape of an argument, to the effect that, if she became disgusted with it, she would give it up, and if she died of it, the consequence would be the same. The result in the one case would be an achievement that would bring him comparative happiness, and the consequence in the other would, he was now satisfied, (such was the misery he had suffered, and was still suffering,) be anything but a misfortune. But Julia took no more than was good for her, and thanked Gustavus heartily for his extreme kindness, while every day she applied herself to the big measure; and every night, while the supply lasted, went to bed with the assistance of Gustavus' own hands.

Thus did matters continue for a long period of time; and all the efforts, and threats, and devices of Gustavus had no more effect in preventing Julia from taking her pleasure, than the restraint of a husband generally has over the irregularities of a wife of true courage, who knows her inalienable rights derived from the just laws of a free land. If his brain seemed to be exhausted in devising remedies, his patience fell a victim before his continued wretchedness—and no marvel either, when it is considered that while other men only bring in the means of supporting a drunken wife, whom the equitable and wise ordinances of the country will not allow him to get quit of except for a crime not a tithe so bad as that of Julia M'Iver, he kept her in means, and cooked for and dressed for her, and nursed her; and all the good he got out of her was the liberty of doing these things for her benefit. By a happy chance, however, Gustavus' brains were not yet exhausted. Space and time he had taken to ruminate upon his evils, and to hit upon one expedient more for the envied cure; and he resolved to carry his Julia off to the country, where, in some secluded cottage, he might exercise such an authority over her as would prevent her from following her usual courses. So accordingly he did just as he had resolved; and, in a small domicile in a part of the north, he took up his habitation, for no other purpose in the world than to cure Julia of her heart-engrained propensity. The place he had chosen seemed the very choicest that could have been found in all Scotland—ay, or England or Ireland either; for there was no house where a gossip might live, or a whisky vender hang board, for miles; while a carrier that passed daily, brought him everything that was necessary for human sustenance; and he himself could cook and wash unseen by the eyes of mortal. For six weeks was Julia M'Iver as sober as the Chief Justice of England, or the President of the Supreme Court, and it was manifest that the never a drop of anything stronger than river water had got beyond her parched lips. Gustavus triumphed as no man ever triumphed under less than an ovation itself; and Julia was forced to be contented with the limited tyranny of making him continue his domestic duties; for the more sober she was kept, the less she would do, and her time was chiefly occupied in reading novels, which Gustavus was glad to give her as an inadequate surrogation for whisky. But all this was too good to last, though how it should be interrupted, no man with less than the spirit of one *Davo versatior* could possibly tell. Jove's greatness is, however, no less true than the fact that Gustavus came in one night and found, and staggered with perfect amazement as he found, Mrs Julia M'Iver lying on the floor, more perfectly obnubilated, speechless, and senseless, from the effects of the liquid enemy, than he had ever seen her in his life. Yet there was no one near; the carrier had not called for a week; she could not have been absent from the house for more than half-an-hour; and he himself had been out stalking for exercise, and rejoicing in his triumph for no more than three full quarters. The matter seemed a mystery as deep as any that ever was covered by the Eleusinian veil; and having put her to bed, as he had done a thousand times before, he set about an investigation and search through all the premises, which ended in a look of gaunt amazement, and an ineffectual striding backwards and forwards, till he threw himself on a seat, and gave up the task in despair. Nor, after he had nursed her into sobriety, could he make a jot more of the inexplicable subject; for Julia hadtoo much good sense to tell where she got the treasure, and only smiled at him, as his heavy lips twisted themselves into a question, where, in the name of the author of all evil himself, she had fallen upon that infernal element. No light was to be thrown upon the subject from any of the quarters from which evidence could have been looked for, and the circumstance might have remained as one of these solitary wonders that have perplexed mankind from the beginning of the world, and been passed over in despair, if Julia had afterwards remained sober, but she had scarcely recovered, and Gustavus had only begun to hope once more, when she was found again in the same state; and every two days, or at farthest three, she repeated the habit, till as last she was as bad, if not worse than she had ever been in the midst of dram shops in the city of Edinburgh. Never a word of explanation would she give on the subject; the carrier was watched, and found to deposit nothing; the inhabitants at the distance of miles were interrogated in vain; the house was again searched—no one had been seen to call; and all was as obscure as the numbers of Pythagoras, the Bœotian enigma, or the poems of Carcinus; the deuce a beam of light could Gustavus get to clear up the dark mystery.

He had now retreated from a bad position to one a mighty deal worse; for, in the midst of a town, he could sometimes see a friend, and smoke a pipe, in the fumes of which all his cares were, for a time, enveloped, and kept from the eyes of his haunted fancy; but now, in the midst of a comparative wilderness, he had no associate, but that very limb of Satan himself, that was the source and origin of the misery to which he was enslaved. He was, besides rolled up in a cloud of mystery, in which the wicked enchantress sat and mocked him, like some of those eastern genii, that love to look and speak through thick vapours, which increase the mystic character of their power. Still she contrived to get intoxicated; and, so vain had been his efforts to trace the source of the evil, that he verily believed the imp was possessed of some charm, whereby she realized a compact with the enemy of mankind. If he went out to stalk round the house and brood over his misfortunes, he found that she had, in the meantime, got herself made perfect in insensibility; and if she, by any means, got to a short distance from the house unobserved, she returned in a condition no less lamentable. It was a big, crying evil, fronted with shame, and adminicled with devilries of every degree and colour that ever came from the box of Pandora. It was impossible that man could stand it; and necessity, the mother of invention, stung the obtuse brain of Gustavus to something like the *ingenium perfervidum* of genius itself. He knew very well that he had terrified men; and, indeed, as love is said to be inspired by a look, so one glance of him was, of a surety, sufficient to have produced fear in any one but Julia, who valued his fierce looks no more than if they had been smiles. But he could do more than look—he could threaten; and the question that troubled him, for a time, was, what he should threaten; for he had made up his mind to terrify her in some way; and the sheer necessity of projecting something worthy of himself, was the parent of one of the most extraordinary expedients that ever came from the brain of genius. He told her, with a big oath, and a face at which the walls of St Sebastian might have trembled to their foundations, that, the first time he found her intoxicated, he would put her in a coffin, and actually bury her in the earth, as deep and sure as ever Jonah was buried in the belly of the biggest monster of the deep. Nor was the threat a sheer gust of breath, for he immediately set about making a real coffin—a performance which he executed very well, painting it as black as fashion requires, and studding it with a goodly portion of white buttons, which he tore from a mass of old regimentals; and, having finished it, he placed it in his bedroom, as a grim indication of the reality of his intentions But the woman who could defy the terrors of such a face as that of Gustavus M'Iver, had nothing to fear from the sight of a coffin; and so, of a surety, it turned out—for the determined baggage not only laughed broad in his countenance, but told him to it, that, so long as

he was cowardly enough to have any fear of the gallows, she had not a jot of reason to be afraid of being buried alive.

Both parties, in this way, seemed equally determined. Gustavus took his usual mighty strides along the room, and set the pulleys of his facial muscles in rapid play; and Julia, the pert minx, indulged in her laughing mockery, that seemed to set him and his coffin at defiance. That she was as serious as Socrates in her disbelief of his intentions, was very soon made manifest—for the coffin had not been three days old, when she got as drunk as Midas; and that he was apparently as determined as Draco, he very soon gave suitable demonstrations—for, in place of lifting her into bed according to his usual practice, he placed her into the grim chest, and, placing a mattock on the top of it, he hoisted it on his shoulders, and strode away forth to a wood as dark as the recesses of the Cumæan witch, that stood at some distance from his habitation. There, as good fortune would have it, he found, already dug to his hand, a deep hole, round the edges of which grew a profusion of bushes and furze, sufficient to make the pit as grim and frightful as the very grave itself; and there, having deposited his charge, with plenty of room for breath through the holes he had made in the lid, he turned him round, and stalked away home to cook his dinner.

Now, it happened that honest Angus M'Guire and Donald M'Nair, two brawny Highlanders, were that day busily occupied in distilling a drop of good whisky, in a subterraneous distillery, to which the hole wherein Gustavus had laid his wife, led by a covered and concealed passage; and it was in no other than this very place that Julia had been so plentifully supplied with the liquor by which she was so often inebriated. Sitting by the mouth of the worm or serpent, which gave forth drop by drop the poison, stronger and more hurtful than ever came from the mouth of a real snake, they heard a strange noise on the ground over their heads, as Gustavus was busy about the details of his interment, and shook with unfeigned terror, as if they had been on the point of being discovered in their illicit operations. By and by they heard a rumbling in the mouth of the cavern, as if some one had been in the act of descending, and, rising and seizing each a pistol and a sword, they stood on the defensive, prepared to slay the first gauger that should set his face into their subterraneous dominions. But the never an exciseman appeared: in place of that, to them, most fearful of all mortal beings, they saw the identical coffin in which Julia M'Iver had been laid, fall with a heavy sound upon the floor of their dark habitation. Terror-struck, twenty times more than if they had seen the ghost of a murdered exciseman, they stood with their hair forcing up their bonnets on their head, and stared till their eyes seemed ready to burst from the sockets, at the dreadful object of their fears. A faint light glimmered through the cave, and was reflected from the rows of white buttons with which the black vision was studded; and all the horrid features of the grim apparition were displayed by that kind of dim light by which they could be seen to most advantage. They could speak not a word to each other; and their mutual looks excited by sympathy a greater mutual fear than ever; and so they still stood, and looked, and wondered, and would have moved their bodies to take a closer survey, but could not for very nervousness—albeit any one of them would have knocked a gauger on the head in an instant. But it was clear, even to themselves, that they could not thus stand staring at a coffin for ever; and it is not unlikely that this prospective impossibility supplied the place of courage; and so, Donald being the less timid of the two, gradually approached and surveyed their extraordinary visiter. Beckoning his friend Angus forward, he proceeded to force open the lid.

"The corpse o' Julia M'Iver, our goot customer," said he, "as sure as my name's Tonald M'Nair!" And Angus, bending his head down, and holding his hands up, acknowledged the apparent truth. "Murtered py Gustaphus, py Cot!" added he, "and puried here to hide the plack purning shame!"

And they sat down by the coffin, and stared at each other and at the dead beauty, lost in deep cogitation as to what they should do. Their thoughts both took the same direction.

"What is to pe done?" muttered they both at the same instant.

"We cannot inform, and we cannot take the pody to Gustaphus," again said Donald; "for that would tiscover us."

"To pe surely na," said Angus; "but we can pury her, cannot we, Tonald?"

"Ay, that we can," answered the latter; "and that we will too, as surely as my grandmother was puried in the houf o' Kepplemechan."

"Ay, or as mine was puried in Fochapers kirkyard," rejoined Angus; "but we maun let the nicht fa' first, or it may pe said that we were the murterers o' the puir cratur. Ochone! put this is a tam pad world. We maun hae a quaich to keep up our courage."

And so they set about preparing themselves for the work they had in prospect, by drinking of their own spirits by the side of the coffin; every now and then looking in the face of Julia, and lamenting the unhappy fate of their former visiter, with whom they had drunk many a good bumper, and enjoyed much good fun and frolic.

In this occupation, and exchanging many a comely sentiment on the wickedness of man, and the shortness and uncertainty of human life, they passed several hours, until it should be dark enough for the purpose of interring Julia in reality, which they would execute as surely as ever mortal was consigned to dust. They had drunk till their eyes began to reel in their heads, and till tears of mawkish and drunken sentimentality were dropping on the face of their merry boon companion, as she lay in her bier. A toast of exquisite pathos—"Here's to the good cratur's soul then!" had just escaped from Donald's lips, when Julia opened her eyes, and, altogether unconscious where she lay, obeyed the first impulse of her wakening heart, by holding out her hand, and asking for a glass of the whisky which she saw them drinking with so much good will. Twenty ghosts in their winding sheets could not have produced a greater sensation; for the two Highlanders threw from them their quaichs, and, starting to their feet, flew, with a scream of terror that might have been heard upon the surface of the earth itself, into the farthest recesses of the dark abode.

"Heaven pe merciful to us!" they both muttered, as they crouched down beside the stove, and eyed fearfully the moving corpse, through the dim light that came from the half-concealed fire; and their fears had a small chance of being removed or alleviated by what they farther heard and saw; for, as they watched and trembled, they witnessed the rising terrors of Julia herself, who, looking around her, and seeing herself placed in the coffin, had never a shadow of doubt that she was actually buried, and that she was in the region appointed for the wicked daughters of men. She began to groan piteously; and, being yet only half sober, mixed up her thoughts of the lower regions with the feelings she cherished on earth, in such a grotesque manner, that it would have been impossible for an ordinary person to have heard her without at once trembling and laughing.

"And am I, of a surety, here at the long run," she muttered, "among devils and devils' dams, who will have never a qualm of mercy for me any more than they have for

their other victims, who have broken the laws of the upper world?" And, sighing as deep as her stomach, she paused and again soliloquised:—"But did I not see my good friends, Angus M'Guire and Donald M'Nair, drinking by my side, even at this moment? There cannot be a doubt on't, and they will be dead and damned too for a certainty; but, faith, I care not if I should be here after all, if I fare as they were faring even now, when I saw them with the quaichs in their very hands, as I have seen before in the distillery in the wood of Balmaclellan, so often when I was in the body. Ho! there! Donald M'Nair, it is no other than Julia Briggs that calls ye, and she is as thirsty as fire can make her."

The truth now began to dawn on the minds of the Highlanders. "She is no more tead than I am, or any living pody," cried Donald, as he began to move from his dark hole. "I am coming, my tarling Julia; and, py te Holy Virgin, you shall not want what ye are now asking for!" And, pulling Angus along with him, he again approached the coffin, where he saw his old friend looking up from her prostrate position with a pair of as clear eyes as whisky ever illuminated. "Are ye tead or living, Julia?" cried Angus.

"I cannot tell you till I get a quaich," answered Julia; and the medicine was on the instant adminstered by Donald, when all doubt on the mysterious subject having been dispelled, her friends lifted her from the coffin, and they set to work after their usual manner, which was no other than indulging in numerous potations. The recollection of Gustavus's threat enabled her to explain everything; and as they sat carousing and singing in great glee, they laughed heartily at the circumstance of Gustavus having buried his wife in a distillery, with the view of curing her of a love of whisky.

While they were thus as happy as drink and frolic could make any of the sons or daughters of Adam, Gustavus was meditating on the probable effects of his extraordinary remedy for drunkenness, and enjoying already the triumph he anticipated, as the fruits of his ingenuity. He had cooked for himself a good dinner, and, being thus also in good spirits, he counted the hours as they passed, every moment of which was worth to him a grain of gold, in so far as they would purchase a relief from the thraldom and misery in which he had been so long held. He had given her four hours of the grave, and the increasing length of his stride seemed to indicate that he was fast approaching some resolution, which was probably to go and see how his Julia was faring in her dark habitation. He had left the ropes by which she had been let down, in such a position that he could draw her out again with the greatest of ease, so that he was perfectly at ease on the score of her ultimate safety; but all his efforts, he knew, would be worse than endeavouring to make iron swim, to hold an eel by the tail, to dissect cheese mites, or make a cod warble, or any other *opera inanis*, if she were taken out before she awoke and experienced all the terrors of her situation. He therefore gave her an hour or two more, and then sallied forth as grim as Hercules when he went a bull-baiting, to reconnoitre, and ascertain if any indications of her being awake came from the grave (as he expected it would be) of her bad habits and the womb of her regeneration. A very few movements of his immense limbs brought him to the spot; but not an inch of the rope he could find; and, though he pulled aside the bushes, and stared with goggle eyes into the pit, not a glimpse of the coffin could he discover. The affair was marvellous and unfathomable as the wells of Agamemnon; and he stood and stared with mute wonder, at what appeared to be nothing else in the world than bewitched devilry. He looked around him to see if he could find any traces of either the coffin or Julia Briggs; but all was still and hazy, and nothing could he see or hear; so he tried the pit again, and, to search the bottom of it, he took a long stick from a neigbouring tree, and plunged it in, and groped, and sounded; but it was clear that he never struck on wood, nor indeed upon anything but the soft brush stuff with which the Highlanders had again closed up the aperture. He even descended into the hole, as far as he could reach his limbs, while he held on by the bushy side; and he thus ascertained to a dead certanity that the never a bit of a coffin was there, or indeed anything but furze, among which his feet became entangled. Having got out again with difficulty, he fell to roaring and shouting—"Julia M'Iver! Julia M'Iver!" But no answer was returned, save by the echoing wood, which mocked him like the American bird of many voices that laughs at the eloquence of man. No other conclusion could he come to, but that Julia, coffin and all, had been carried off by the prime minister of Oberon, or some other power, that had determined to punish her for her intemperance, or him for his cruelty; and his former love returning, now that he had, perhaps for ever, lost the object of it, he grew frantic as the lover of Briseis, and stamped and strode about the wood, accusing himself as the murderer of his wife, and trembling for his neck, which he had put in a position of jeopardy. To add to his terrors, he sometimes thought he heard strange shouts of mirth, coming from under the ground; and his mind still straying to the land of the court of the pigmy king, he fancied that the thieves were rejoicing in their subterranean abodes, over the triumph they had achieved over a mortal creature. The strength or weakness of superstition has nothing to do with the size of the bones, or the strength of thews and sinews of the individuals over whom it exercises its control; and there was no marvel at all that Gustavus felt undefined terrors laying hold of him, as the darkness of the night increased, and the blackness of the mystery enveloped his brain. He had faced cannon in his day, and hewn down warriors as gigantic as himself without a qualm; but that was no reason why he should not quail before the powers of infernal or subterranean agency; and so to be sure it was well proved by what followed; for he marched home as if he had been on a retreat, with, perhaps, more ideas in his head than ever could have been supposed to find an entry into the impenetrable fortress which, in spite of rockets, he had so long carried on his shoulders.

He passed the night in pacing his apartment, expecting every moment that Julia, who was occupied according to her heart's desire, would return to her home—but no Julia came; and in the morning he was saluted by the carrier, who asked him, with a knowing look, what had become of Mrs M'Iver, and to what use he had applied the coffin he had seen through the window when he last passed the house. Gustavus stared at him in amazement, without deigning one word of reply; but, the man being gone, he saw, with as much light as his brain was capable of reflecting, something like a foundation for a charge of murder against him, in the event of his wife not making her appearance. This conclusion wound up the evils that he had entailed upon himself by entering into the fearful state of matrimony; and there can be little doubt that, if he had known the Greek of the woman-hater Simonides, of which of course he knew never a syllable, he would have thundered forth the whole epithets of his poem in a voice of thunder. Another day passed, and no Julia was yet to be seen; and on the second day, straggling individuals began to pry about the house, just as if a murder had been committed there, and they were looking for blood-spots. He grew every moment more terrified, was unable to cook, or even to eat, and roamed about with the muscles of his face hanging over the maxillary bones like flaps of leather, and sunken eyes that seemed to look inwards, where there was in fact nothing to be seen worth looking at. Every step frightened him, and every sound startled him, from reveries

of trials and interrogations, and hanging and dissecting; for he looked every hour for a visit from the authorities. He had sense enough to see that everything was against him—the disappearance of Julia—their endless quarrels—the coffin—all arrayed against a drivelling, idiot statement about trying to ween his wife from the quaich, by pretending to bury her alive.

Things were fast progressing to being just as bad as there is any occasion for them to be when a sinful man is the victim; for, some time afterwards, the mother of Julia herself, with two friends from the Canongate, came to see the married pair. Now, Gustavus saw them at a long distance, and knowing that he could not account for his wife, he resolved upon sneaking away into the woods, after locking the door; and this accordingly he did in double quick time; but he had not got far away, when, upon turning to look behind him, he saw the carrier again returning, and very soon stop at his door, and enter into conversation with the three women. He watched all their motions, and it was apparent to him that the very affair of the murder they supposed he had committed was alone the subject of their conversation.

Nay, he saw them begin to try to force open the door, and, able to contain himself no longer, he said to himself—

"Shall Gustavus M'Iver, who has killed a dozen of Frenchmen in one day, be afraid of three women? The never will he, by Saint Sebastian!"

So he went back to the house; and when the three women and the carrier saw him coming out of the planting, they set up such a loud scream as had never been heard in these woods since the reign of the wolves, and ran up to him, crying out that he was a base and a bloody murderer, and demanding to see the body of the sacrificed Julia, who, as her mother ejaculated, was never intended by nature to be the wife of such a fearful ogre.

"Give me the body of my daughter," she said, "dead or alive. Where is the coffin that the carrier saw standing in the house? It is gone, and Julia is in it—buried, no doubt, in some hole of the woods. Why will you not speak, Gustavus M'Iver?"

Now, the very best reason on earth could be assigned for Gustavus saying nothing—and that was, that he had of a real truth nothing in the wide extent of his brain to say, that any one in the world, far less the mother of his wife, would believe for one instant of time. So he stood and rolled over the three women his large eyes, just, as the mother said, as if he would have eaten them all three, as she suspected he had done her daughter; but the never a vocable escaped from his lips.

"Why will you not speak, Gustavus?" cried the mother.

"Why will you not speak, man?" cried another of the women.

"Why will you not speak?" cried they all together in one question, so loud that no question since the time when all the Barons of England asked, in one cry, King John to give them their rights, had ever exceeded in intensity and vociferation.

But it was clear this could last no longer than the patience of the women; and every one knows that the time comprehended by the longevity of that feminine virtue, is not so long as the life of Methuselah; so, in a minute, they fell on him with their nails, and rugged his hair, and scratched his face, and pulled him to the earth, and trampled upon him, till he who had fought in the Peninsula began to think that it was time for him to call up his old courage, and fight once again in his advanced years. So, rising up, he placed himself in an attitude which he knew had produced terrible effects in the Peninsula; and, to be sure, so it might, for he gnashed his teeth, and held out his yard-long arms, and rolled his eyes in such a manner, yet saying not a word all the while, that the women got alarmed, and cried to the carrier to assist them; but the man was off the moment he saw there was a chance of a battle. So the women gave in, and began to try the soothing system with him—an effort in which they were as successful as their sex ever is when a man is to be humbugged. Gustavus was on the instant mollified into softness, and even lugubrious sentimentality; and, offering two of the women an arm each, leaving the other to bring up the rear, he began a solemn march to the scene of his grief—the mysterious spot, where he threw down his long lank body upon the ground, and muttered his sorrows between his lubber lips, in accents that would have put to flight the ugliest satyr that ever sported in a wood. He took up his station close by the mouth of the deceptive grave, to mitigate his sorrow and fear by a little sentiment—a coarse commodity, that might have made another laugh, but sufficient to make him weep. That day he might be in prison and ruined for ever; and, as for Julia M'Iver, he would never see her again. "She has been in this hole three days," said he, pointing to the grave.

"Ochone! ochone!" roared the three women, crying bitterly.

Meanwhile, his heavy eye was fixed on the ground; he heard a noise, and, looking up, what on earth should he see but the head of Julia herself above the earth, and all the rest of her body below it? She leered at him and the women knowingly, and laughed till the woods rang; and, rising up out of the very hole where she had been interred, she ran, or rather staggered to him—for she was fresh from the still—flung herself around his neck, and hugged him with a grasp of embrace that many a husband would give a hundred pounds for any day. Nor was Gustavus insensible to its efficacy; for he returned the embrace, and even cried and blubbered like (as all sentimental writers say when they wish to express great sensibility—that is, babyism) a child—and a very pretty child to be sure he was. We cannot tell how long the embrace lasted. Everything in nature has been measured but love-embraces. Writers are chary on the subject; and very knowingly, too, because they know that it is what is called "a kittle point;" but we have no such qualms, and so boldly assert, that Mr and Mrs M'Iver's embrace lasted at least three minutes. This new apparition transcended all they had yet seen or experienced; for how she could have lain three days and nights in the cold earth, and risen on the fourth as drunk as she was when she was interred, puzzled them beyond any conjuration they had ever heard of. But Gustavus was glad to see her on any condition, and took her straight home, to get an account from her, when she was sober, of all the wonders she had seen in the bowels of the earth; where, in the midst of Hop and Mop, Pip and Trip, Fib and Tib, and Jill and Jin, and all the other imps of Mab's court, she had doutless been since the day on which she was let down into the pit. Whether he or the women ever got this information or not, we cannot say; but it is certain, that he attempted no further cure of Julia's irregular habits, contenting himself with the evil lot of a bad wife, which is, perhaps, the only one on earth that it is utterly impossible to get quit of by any other means than death.

WILSON'S

Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE SINCLAIRS OF POLWARTH.

EARLY in the autumn of the year 1470, a young and lovely female stood at one of the loop-holes of the keep of the old castle of Herdmanstone, in East Lothian, gazing longingly and wistfully at the small section of the beautiful scenery visible through the narrow opening. As she gazed abstractedly upon the bright and joyous scene, the tears coursed each other rapidly and silently down her cheeks, till a deep sigh, which seemed to burst so unconsciously from her bosom as even to startle herself, awakened her from her reverie.

"Marion," said she, turning to a girl who was seated at a small table in the centre of the apartment, with writing materials before her, and whose strong resemblance to herself pointed out their near relationship—"Marion!"

"Well, Maggy, my love, what would you with me?"

"O Marion! is it not sad to be shut up like birds in a cage, while all nature is smiling so sweetly around us?—to look out upon the wooded hills, with the bright sun shining upon them, and the stream gliding between them, and to envy the very beasts of the field, for they are free? Oh, I am sick, sick at heart, of this weary confinement!"

"But, Maggy, dearest," replied her friend, "if we are imprisoned like birds, let us imitate them in other respects: they sing in their cages, Maggy—why should not we? All the moping, and pining, and sighing in the world, will not open our prison doors, or soften my uncle's heart. Keep up your spirits, my dear sister! Remember how cloudy the sky was yesterday, and look at the bright sun to-day! So will it be with us: let us hope our days of penance will soon be over, and, in the meantime, let us not make our grievances greater by brooding over them."

"O Marion, you were always more cheerful and lively than I; and it is easy for you to recommend what is so natural to yourself; but I cannot laugh, and sing, and look happy, while my heart is sad and heavy."

"And why *allow* it to be sad and heavy, Margaret? Do not dwell upon the *present;* look forward to a bright and happy future. I have just finished a letter to George, to warn him of our confinement here; and he is not the man I judge him to be, if he does not move heaven and earth to rescue us."

"But how is your missive to reach him, Menie?"

"Oh! I have no doubt some opportunity will soon present itself. Have you not observed signs of pity and relenting on the rugged features of Dark Simon, our keeper?"

It is now necessary that we should enlighten our readers as to who the fair speakers were. Margaret and Marion Sinclair were co-heiresses of Polwarth, in Berwickshire, and had recently obtained possession of the valuable domains of Polwarth and Kimmerghame. They were orphans; and their nearest surviving male relation was old Sinclair of Herdmanstone, their uncle. They were both lovely and amiable young women; fondly attached to each other, though very dissimilar in character. Marion, the eldest, was of a fine, tall, elegant figure, with full, sparkling black eyes and rich raven locks. There was an expression of firm determination about her finely formed mouth; and, at the same time, a look of archness and light-hearted mirth in the glance of her dark eye, that bespoke a character of no common stamp. She was cheerful, animated, and well-informed; ready, at a moment's warning, to enter into any scheme of merriment or amusement with almost childish enthusiasm; but, at the same time, possessed of a masculine energy of character, which excited respect and esteem, as much as her feminine amiabilities made her the object of admiration and love. Beautiful, and an heiress, it was not surprising that many of the young nobles aspired to her hand; but they had gradually withdrawn from the pursuit, when they became aware of the preference she evidently gave to her near neighbour and early friend, George Baron Wedderburn—a young and gallant nobleman, possessed of all the qualities of mind and person most calculated to captivate the affections of a warm and enthusiastic girl like Marion. He excelled in all the martial exercises of the day—was bold, daring, and energetic; and had a spice of lofty and chivalrous enthusiasm in his disposition; added to which, he was handsome in person, and lively and cheerful in manner. Margaret, the younger sister, was likewise a lovely creature; but, unlike Marion, was fair-complexioned, timid, and retiring. She shrunk from everything like excitement; and was one of those fair and fragile creatures, who are too feeble to act for themselves amid the bustle of active life, and who cling, with the fondness of confiding helplessness, to characters of a firmer stamp than their own. Such a character had Margaret met with in Patrick, brother of the young Baron Wedderburn—one of the bold, active, daring spirits of the times; foremost in every deed of arms; frank, jovial, and boisterous. In the presence of the gentle and timid Margaret, Patrick Hume was an altered being. Admiration for her gentle beauty, and pity for her timid and confiding helplessness, soon ripened into love, which was returned by her with all the warmth of an innocent and trusting heart.

The sisters had been for some time affianced to their respective lovers, and were to be united to them as soon as seemly after the domestic bereavement which had made them heiresses; but an unforeseen calamity overwhelmed all the parties with affliction, and, for a time, threatened to prevent their union. A fine, sunny evening, after several days of successive rain, had tempted the ladies to take a short stroll in the immediate neighbourhood; and they were just entering a shady walk, on their return, when a band of armed men rushed out upon them, and, before they could recover from their surprise, they were made prisoners. The faces of the captors were masked; and no answer was, at first, returned to the repeated and agitated inquiries of the ladies as to their intentions. They proceeded to strip them of their hoods and mantles, and to envelope them in warm, close cloaks, and then seated them on pillions behind two of their party. Poor Margaret was too much alarmed and agitated to attempt any parley with her captors. She suffered herself, unresistingly, to be secured upon the pillion, while the tears were pouring down her cheeks, and she wrung her hands in all the silent agony of fear. Not so Marion. As soon as the first surprise was over, her native spirit was roused by the

daring aggression; and the sight of her sister's tears, and the very consciousness of her helplessness, seemed to nerve her to double resolution.

"Unhand me, ruffians!" said she. "Who are *you* that dare to treat females in this dastardly and unmanly manner?"

"Lady," replied the leader of the band, in an evidently feigned voice, "you are in the hands of friends. No injury is intended to you. You will be treated with gentleness and kindness, if you make no unnecessary resistance. Suffice it, that you are in our power; and it depends upon yourselves how we exercise it."

"And think you that a Sinclair, even though a woman, will tamely submit to be kidnapped, like a slave, from the very threshold of the home of her fathers? Coward!—to wage war upon defenceless women! Oh, that my strength were equal to my spirit! I would trample in the dust fifty such cravens as you!"

"Spare your needless taunts, lady. Men are not to be frightened by words. Ask no questions; they will not be answered. If you value your own comfort, you will be silent."

All Marion's reply to this cool and decided speech was a long, loud cry for assistance; but, before she could repeat it, a rough hand muffled her head in the cloak, through the thick folds of which her voice was no longer audible. The leader then muttered some indistinct orders to his men, four of whom immediately galloped off, carrying with them the mantles of which they had despoiled the ladies. The remainder of the party then put their horses in motion; and, after a rapid, fatiguing, and stormy ride of eight hours, began to slacken their pace as they mounted a steep acclivity, on the summit of which, dimly seen through the dawn of the morning, frowned the battlements of an old and massive castle. Presently, the challenge of a warder was heard; to which the leader of the party replied, in a loud voice—

"Blackadder!"

The rattling of chains was then heard; and the party rode over a drawbridge into the spacious court of the castle. Several attendants were ready, with torches, to receive them. The ladies were lifted from their horses, and ushered, by the leader of the band, up a narrow and winding stone stair, to the apartment in which they were seated at the commencement of our tale. As soon as they had entered, their guide secured the door; and then, withdrawing his mask, displayed to their astonished gaze the features of their uncle.

"Welcome to Herdmanstone, my fair nieces!' said he, with a sneer of triumphant malice. "A rapid ride on such a night as this, must have been rather a treat to romantic damsels like yourselves, particularly as there was both novelty and excitement in the manner of it. You have long been strangers to me, I hope, before we part, we shall have ample time to improve our acquaintance."

"Strangers to your person, Lord of Herdmanstone," said Marion, "but not to your character. Brother of my father, is this the way in which you treat his daughters? When last we met, you were our guest, and now we are"——

"My prisoners, lady, you would say? Be it so; I will not contradict you; it would ill become a man, particularly a man of my character, to gainsay a lady."

"Lord of Herdmanstone, add not insult to injury," said Marion; "we are in your power; but a day will come when you will repent of this daring outrage. I will proclaim your villany to the world."

"Whom will you employ as your heralds, pretty one? Will you transform, by the power of your charms, one of the daws that chatter on the tower, into a white-headed seneschal; or will you make the winds your messengers? *I too* am a Sinclair. We do not things by halves; an old head and fearless heart, are not to be outwitted by a peevish girl. I have laid my plans too well to be foiled by woman's wit or man's treachery." And well and ably he had laid his plans, as we now proceed to shew.

Sinclair, Lord of Herdmanstone, was bold, reckless, and unwavering; his courage was unquestioned, for he had gained a reputation for bravery where all were brave; but it was mere brute instinct, unhallowed by any lofty or noble impulse. He never allowed any considerations of honour or probity to interfere with the gratification of his selfish and grasping passions. He had long cast a covetous eye upon, and would fain have seized the goodly estates of Polwarth and Kimmerghame, to which, in the event of his nieces dying unmarried, he was the next heir; but he hesitated to proceed to any act of open violence—the youth, the beauty, and the helplessness of his nieces, would, he knew, rouse the whole country to repel any such attempt. He was compelled to conceal his mercenary views, and to watch with patience for some safe and favourable opportunity of effecting, by stratagem, what he dared not attempt to compass by violence. At last the betrothment of his nieces, and the fear of the estates escaping from his grasp altogether, roused him to desperation; and he resolved upon seizing their persons, and either keeping them confined at Herdmanstone for life, or obliging them to make over to him their coveted possessions. Great was the alarm of all Polwarth on the night of the abduction, when hour after hour elapsed, and the ladies had not made their appearance; but it was supposed that, as the night had set in dark and gloomy, they had prolonged their rambles to Wedderburn or some of the neighbouring holds, and taken shelter there with their friends till morning. But when the next day's sun was high in the heavens and still no appearance of the missing ones, and when, upon inquiry in the neighbourhood, no intelligence could be gained of them, serious fears were entertained for their safety, and parties of retainers were dispatched in every direction in search of them. The news of their disappearance soon spread far and wide, and various friends of the family dispersed over the country in pursuit.

Foremost among these in zeal and exertion, was the Lord of Herdmanstone! A few hours after the conversation with his nieces, which we have detailed above, he happened (by dint of hard riding) to pass the neighbourhood of Polwarth, and to hear the sad news of their loss. He seemed overwhelmed by the unexpected intelligence, and joined actively and eagerly in the search, traversing every dell and brake with the restless anxiety and desperate energy of one who dreads the worst, but nerves his spirit to dare it boldly. The friends of the house of Polwarth were astonished at his zeal, and gratified and surprised by the warm interest he seemed to take in the fate of his nieces, towards whom his hitherto unfriendly bearing had been a matter of common remark. Some of them, however, and among these the young Lord of Wedderburn, looked with suspicion upon this sudden change of manner, and had dark misgivings that the Lord of Herdmanstone knew more on the subject of the disappearance of the ladies than he chose to acknowledge.

It was on the evening of the third day of their unsuccessful search, that a party of the retainers of Wedderburn were returning home, wearied and dejected, with the young baron at their head, when their route led them to the banks of the Blackadder, over which, at some distance down its course, a rude wooden bridge had been thrown for the accommodation of foot passengers. The river was in general shallow and easily fordable, but was now, and had been for some days, considerably swollen, in consequence of a continuance of heavy rain. On their arrival at the bridge, they found, to their great annoyance, that part of it had been washed away; and they were obliged

to proceed further down, to endeavour to cross at the next stream. About a hundred yards below the bridge, there was a kind of eddy current, occasioned by a precipitous bank, overhung with brushwood, which projected some feet into the bed of the river. At the lower end of this eddy, partially concealed by the overhanging brushwood, floated a dark object, which had become entangled among the branches. The quick eye of Wedderburn caught sight of it immediately, and he exclaimed to one of his band—"Ah, Hugh! what is that? jump down the bank, and see."

Clinging to the brushwood, and slipping down from stem to stem, the man nearly reached the brink of the stream, and then firmly clasping the branch of an overhanging tree with one hand, he stretched downwards to pick up the floating object, which he threw over his arm, and, springing again from bush to bush, was soon at his master's side.

"What is it, Hugh?"

"I think it is some kind of woman's gear, my lord; but I am not knowing in these matters."

"It is a lady's mantle!" said Wedderburn, eyeing it with intense interest.

"Merciful Providence! I would know it among a thousand. It is the Lady Marion's! Look, Patrick!" (to his brother,) "do you know it?"

Patrick Home knew it at a glance, and his heart sickened at the sight; but he strove to persuade his brother that he might be mistaken.

"It *is* like the Lady Marion's mantle, George; but there are many others in the country of the same fashion and colour."

"Don't try to deceive me, Patrick! I know it is hers. Heaven in its mercy grant that no accident has befallen her! When was that bridge carried away?"

"I heard that it was swept down by the flood, two nights ago," said one of the followers; "and folks said that the water-kelpie was heard screaming far above the stream."

A groan burst from the breast of young Wedderburn at this announcement, and he exchanged glances of peculiar import with his brother. The attendants seemed to partake of the fears of their master, for, though not a word was uttered, each began silently to follow the downward course of the stream, looking anxiously along the banks, and scrutinizing intently every portion of the drift which the receding flood had left there. A few hundred yards further down, a small bank was left dry by the falling river, on which, half-buried in sand and gravel, was found another mantle and hood, which the brothers immediately recollected as being one the Lady Margaret was in the habit of wearing. No doubt now remained on their minds as to the fate of the ladies—they must have been on the bridge at the time it was washed away, and their cries had been mistaken for those of the water-kelpie, and, instead of procuring them assistance, had frightened the superstitious hearers from the place. The brothers were at first rooted to the spot by anguish and despair, when the conviction flashed upon their minds; but, soon rousing their energies, they dispatched some of their attendants for torches and more assistance, while the remainder of the party recommenced their melancholy search. Night had now cast her dark mantle over the scene, but sleep was banished from the neighbourhood: old and young, masters and servants, the whole population of the district, thronged the banks of the river, wandering hurriedly up and down, their dark, silent forms seen indistinctly through the gloom, while the light of a hundred torches flashed fitfully upon the stream, or threw a pale, sickly glare over the trees on its banks. But torch after torch was gradually extinguished, and the grey light of morning broke, and found the brothers still engaged in their unavailing search, pale haggard, and dispirited. For days the same persevering search was in vain exerted, till at last hope gave way to despair, and the Ladies Sinclair were mourned for as dead. Amid all their grief for the loss of their betrothed brides, the Home brothers cherished an unaccountable distrust and suspicion of the Lord of Herdmanstone. It appeared to them both, that his behaviour throughout the whole of the sad business had been forced and unnatural: he had been too forward, too loud in the first outburst of his apparent grief, really to feel all that he expressed, knowing, as they did, the feelings of jealousy and rancour with which he had always regarded his nieces.

"A sad confirmation of our worst fears, my friends," said the Lord Sinclair to the brothers, when he heard of the discovery of the ladies' gear; "so young and so lovely, to be snatched away so suddenly from the enjoyment of life and wealth!—theirs is a sad fate indeed."

"It cannot be!—it cannot be that they are dead," impetuously answered Patrick Home; "till I see their bodies lying before me, I will not believe it; and I swear by the Holy Rood, not to rest till I penetrate the mystery of their disappearance."

"And I join in the oath," said his brother; "and if there has been any treachery practised," continued he, sternly eyeing Sinclair, "foot to foot and sword to sword shall the traitor answer for it to me."

"I, too, will join with you, my friends," exclaimed Lord Sinclair; "I am the natural guardian of the dear lost ones; I will aid you with my sword and counsel."

"Lord of Herdmanstone," replied Patrick Home, "we distrust your counsel, we need not your aid, and we scorn your friendship. You were not wont to speak so fondly of your nieces. Excellent guardian!—affectionate uncle!—for such you must be, to lament so deeply the 'dear lost ones;' but, my Lord, the words are but words—your heart disclaims them—even while you speak, your eye brightens with the anticipation of enjoying their broad domains."

"What!" exclaimed Sinclair, handling his sword; "beware, young man, how you stir my choler, with your taunting speeches. A Sinclair brooks not insult."

"And a Home can strike home, my Lord. But put up your sword—I bide my time—we may yet cross steel on this matter, but not now. I have other work before me, but not with you for a companion. I despise and distrust you."

"Why should you distrust me?" said Sinclair, smothering his anger under an appearance of calm and conscious innocence; "of what do you suspect me?"

"My suspicions I keep to myself, my Lord. I accuse you of nothing; but I will find you out in your dark laid schemes. On *that* night, my Lord, the water-kelpie was heard to shriek, and the belated peasants saw the dark forms of the departed gliding among the trees. The riders of Herdmanstone, my Lord, might well be mistaken for spirits of darkness; and the timid hinds might easily fancy the scream of a woman, heard amid darkness and storm, to be the boding cry of the spirit of the stream."

"And if the retainers of my house *were* abroad on that night, and the cry *were* other than that of the water-kelpie," replied Sinclair, "what light does that throw upon the fate of the ladies of Polwarth? The raging stream, the broken bridge, the garments found upon the bank, all prove but too clearly the certainty of their loss."

"The garments have been found, my Lord, but where are the bodies? The rough blast, or the rougher hands of lawless men, may have torn the mantles from the shoulders of weak and defenceless females; but the same stream which swept away their bodies, would, ere this, have cast them up again from its bosom. No, my Lord; there is a mystery about their disappearance which time and patience will unravel. The sleuth-hound may for a

moment be held at check by some false trail, but he returns perseveringly and patiently to the chase: and, like that hound, will I spare neither strength nor patience till I track out the objects of my pursuit."

"Bravely spoken," said Sinclair; "I, too, will imitate the blood-hound in the steadiness of *my* pursuit; but as we may not hunt in couples, tell me where would you direct your search?"

"To Herdmanstone Castle, my Lord," replied Patrick Home, fiercely.

"Herdmanstone Castle!"

"Ay, to your own stronghold; for there it misdoubts me much you have concealed the ladies."

"Now, by my faith," said Sinclair, with apparent calmness, and in a tone of sincere compassion, "the loss of your lady-love has bewildered your senses, I believe. I pity the mad ravings of a disappointed lover, or I would strike you to the earth where you stand. Nay, nay," he continued, as he noticed Home's sudden start of anger and defiance, and his sword half drawn out of its scabbard; "you shall have better proof of the folly of your suspicions than any your sword can furnish you with. To-morrow you shall have free permission to search my castle, and satisfy yourselves."

"To-day, my Lord!—to-day, if you are a true man; why put off till to-morrow?"

"Still doubting—well, be it so; this moment, if you think proper, we will ride. Go, seek your steeds, and on this spot I will wait your return. I cannot enter in peace the halls of those who treat me as a foe; but, for all your insults to me, a day of reckoning will come. Go alone, and unattended; you cannot fear any danger from me."

"Fear!—danger from you!" said Home; "we fear not, but we distrust you. But, as none of your retainers are with you, you cannot *prepare* for our visit to Herdmanstone. We will be with you anon."

"Fools!" muttered Sinclair, as they left him; "so you think to circumvent me." Then looking cautiously around, and waiting till they had withdrawn some distance he gave a long, low whistle. The signal was almost immediately repeated, and one of the retainers of Herdmanstone made his appearance from among the bushes, and approached his chief.

"Where is your horse, Walter?" said Sinclair in a hurried tone.

"Close at hand, in the wood, my Lord."

"Mount then, and ride to Herdmanstone. Spare not whip nor spur; you ride on a matter of life and death. Give this ring to Dark Simon; tell him to remove the Ladies Sinclair instantly into the secret chamber, and to conceal everything that may betray the secret of their being in the castle. And, mark me, Walter, if you fail in your mission, the dungeons of Herdmanstone are dark and deep, and few have ever found their way out of them. Do my bidding well and secretly—mind me, *secretly*—a purse of broad pieces shall be your guerdon."

The vassal bowed, took the ring and disappeared. In a few moments the clattering of his horse's hoofs was heard, and the sound soon died away in the distance.

"So far well," said he, talking to himself; "for the present I am safe; and if I can but contrive to keep those hot-headed fools at bay till I have frightened or starved the girls into a *voluntary* surrender of their rights to me, I care not for all the Homes in Berwickshire. If the worst comes to the worst, there are the dungeons. But I would fain hope I shall not be obliged to resort to such extremity." The sound of galloping steeds now warned him of the approach of the brothers Home; and, folding his arms, he leaned against the trunk of a tree with an air of careless abstraction.

"Ah, my friends," said he, sneeringly "here I and the tree stand where you left us. Perhaps some little bird, nestled in the boughs overhead, may have overheard your injurious suspicions of me, and have flown to Herdmanstone to warn the *ladies* of your approach."

"Enough, my Lord; time will prove whether or not our suspicions are correct. Lead on!—we follow!"

The party was soon in motion, Lord Sinclair having mounted his horse, which stood fastened to a neighbouring tree. The Home brothers were all impatience to push onwards, and urged their horses into a fleet gallop; but Lord Sinclair exclaimed—

"Gently, gallants, gently—my poor grey is nearly blown already; you must slacken your speed if you wish me to keep you company."

The Homes could ill brook the delay; but they were obliged perforce to yield, for they knew that, without the passport of its lord, they would not be allowed to enter Herdmanstone. At length they reached the castle; and one glance at the countenance of Dark Simon, was sufficient to satisfy Sinclair that his orders had been obeyed; but, to make assurance doubly sure, he contrived, unobserved, to mutter to him—

"Is all safe?"

"All safe, my Lord," was the reply.

"Now, welcome to Herdmanstone, gallants. You are free to search the castle from bastion to dungeon keep. Simon, throw open all the halls to these knights, and marshal them on their way. My attendance, I suppose, you would rather dispense with—I wait you here."

Literally did the Homes avail themselves of the permission granted them; no nook nor cranny did they leave unsearched—but in vain; and they returned, sad and disappointed, to the court, where Sinclair awaited their return.

"Well," said he, with a triumphant smile, "are you satisfied?"

"Disappointed, my Lord, but not satisfied," replied Patrick Home; "one check does not baffle the blood-hound; and, as I said before, I will follow my quarry to the death."

"Nobly said," answered Sinclair; "I honour your spirit, and trust you will have better success elsewhere than at Herdmanstone. Now will you honour my poor castle by resting your wearied steeds, and partaking of such rude fare as it can afford you?"

"Lord of Herdmanstone," said Home, "as long as there is a sky above our heads, and the green turf under our feet, never will we break the bread of friendship within these walls, while they own you for their master. If we find that we have wronged you by our suspicions, we are ready and willing to do you justice like true knights; but now we have other work on hand. Farewell!"

With heavy hearts the brothers returned to Wedderburn, where we must leave them for the present, to brood over their disappointment, and to make further ineffectual efforts to ascertain the fate of the Ladies Sinclair. Return we now to Herdmanstone. Great was the surprise and alarm of the fair prisoners, when, in consequence of the orders of their uncle, they were hurried from their comfortable apartments to the dark and dreary secret chamber. In vain they questioned Dark Simon as to the meaning of this sudden change; he paid no attention to their agitated inquiries: but merely gloomily and morosely urged them to hurry their movements. His rough manner was, however, only assumed; the affable deportment and patient resignation of the ladies had insensibly awakened the better feelings of his nature, and he would fain have resigned a charge which was becoming every day more and more revolting to him; but he was restrained from remonstrating, by his knowledge of the stern and vindictive character of his lord and by the fear that some other warder

might be appointed, who would render their captivity still more unbearable. The knights, as we have seen, departed unsuccessful from their search; and as soon as they were no longer visible from the battlements, he returned to conduct the ladies back to their former chamber. After having secured the door, he was descending gloomily to the court, and muttering curses on the day when he first entered the service of Herdmanstone, and entailed upon himself the disagreeable office of gaoler to helpless youth and beauty, when he was startled by the voice of his lord, exclaiming—"Well, Simon, how fare the pretty lady birds?"

"Even as caged birds may, my Lord; singing the song of grief, and longing in vain for liberty. Methinks, my Lord, under favour, it would be a merciful act to let them forth to breathe the fresh air"——

"And to escape to Polwarth? No, no, I have them, and I will keep them till they sing a song of my own choosing. Ha! you dare to mutter, and to put on gloomy looks to your lord and master! Beware the dungeon keep!"

Simon saw his danger, and felt that he was now a marked man. He had served his lord long and faithfully—and what was to be his reward? His resolution was immediately adopted. He smoothed his brow, and answered calmly and respectfully—

"And is it not enough, my Lord, to make a true vassal discontented, to see his mates ride out, day after day, with their noble master, to deeds of strife and foray, while he is left alone to keep watch and ward over a couple of whining women?—instead of listening to the spirit-stirring war-cry, to be condemned to hear sighs and groans, and woman's complainings?—to listen to the prayers and supplications of wayward women, instead of the cries for mercy of a vanquished foeman? No, no, my Lord, I want liberty. Let me ride forth, as before these unlucky damsels came, in the train of my noble master, and you will see no gloom upon my brow, and hear no mutterings of discontent."

"Well, well, good Simon, we will think of it. At present, you must continue in your office. I have none other I can trust like you."

"My Lord, I have always served the house of Sinclair faithfully, and I will do so to the end," said Simon, saluting his chief as he retired. "Yes," muttered he, "I *will* serve the house of Sinclair; but not in the way he anticipates. The dungeon keep!—ay, he did well to threaten me with the dungeon keep—me who have served him but too long and too well for my soul's good; and now, for my *body's* good, I will shake off my allegiance as soon as I can with safety."

When he next went to carry to the ladies' chamber their afternoon meal, Marion Sinclair thus addressed him, encouraged by the pitying expression of his countenance, and the increased gentleness of his manner—

"Simon, good Simon, can you not tell us how long this weary imprisonment of ours is to last? Is there no hope of rescue or relief?"

"None, my Lady. The belief of the country is, that you were drowned; and there is none to contradict the report, for the *walls* of Herdmanstone are not more silent than the tongues of its retainers, when they are warned to conceal the dark deeds of their lord."

"Dark deeds! did you call them dark deeds, Simon? Do you not think this cruel imprisonment one of them?"

"I do, my Lady; and, rough and rude as I may have appeared, I have always pitied you; but, alas! my ability to serve you equals not my inclination; for, if I were suspected of such a wish, my neck would soon form acquaintance with the nearest tree. Why, it was but yesterday he threatened me with the dungeon keep for daring to mutter something in your favour."

"You! *you* speak in our favour, kind, good Simon! and we were thinking you, all the time, so hard and cruel? But why not leave that bold, bad man, Simon? Put yourself under the protection of Polwarth and of Wedderburn, and you may laugh at the dungeons of Herdmanstone. Help us to escape, and, on the word of a Sinclair, your safety shall be provided for, and a safe and comfortable retreat provided for your later years."

"I dare not, lady."

"Dare not!—dare not, from a man!" replied Marion Sinclair, her eyes flashing with excitement; "what is there a man cannot dare? Even I, weak woman as I am, am determined to escape, and will *dare* the risk alone, if your craven spirit quails from it!"

"Mine is no *craven* spirit, lady; but it is needful to have a wary one. The eyes of many are upon me, and I am almost as close a prisoner as yourselves. I know not how to assist you."

"Contrive to have this packet conveyed to the Knight of Wedderburn. When he hears that Marion Sinclair is alive and a prisoner, he will not rest night or day until he sets us free."

"I will do my best endeavour, lady," said Simon, as he withdrew.

Late one evening in the following October, Patrick Home was wending his weary way homewards, over the Lammermuir, attended by a couple of armed followers. He was wearied in body, and dejected in mind; for vain had been all his inquiries, and no traces could he discover of the missing fair ones. The report he had formerly heard, that the retainers of Herdmanstone had been *out* on the night of their disappearance, constantly recurred to his mind; and, coupled with his knowledge of the unprincipled character of the Lord Sinclair, confirmed him in his suspicions; but how to unravel the mystery that enveloped their fate, he knew not. He had already searched the stronghold without effect, and he was sure that, without the castle walls, no concealment could have baffled his eager and persevering inquiries. He was riding listlessly along, apart from his retainers, and had just entered a narrow gully or ravine, leaving, in the abstraction of the moment, his steed to follow its own course along the narrow path, and uttering aloud the thoughts that were passing through his mind.

"He durst not—for his life he durst not!" said he; "he knows there is not a sword in the Lothians but would leap from its sheath to avenge such a deed. And yet 'tis strange!—'tis passing strange! Where else can they have vanished to? Perhaps—oh, no, no, they cannot be dead!"

"They are not dead, Sir Knight!" said a voice close at his ear.

He started and turned round. Beside him, on a steed covered with foam, and sobbing with exertion, rode a horseman, whose approach the soft nature of the ground and his own abstraction had prevented his hearing. By the uncertain light, all that he could distinguish was, that he was young, active, and well armed.

"Up and be doing, Sir Patrick Home!" said the stranger; "this is no time to be muttering fond fancies to the winter winds, and riding with a slackened rein, when you should be leading the retainers of Wedderburn to rescue their future lady. Fie, fie, upon your sloth!"

"What mean you?" replied Home, "and who are you," continued he, drawing his sword, "who dare taunt a Home with words of scoffing."

"Men draw not their swords on their friends, Sir Knight. I am your friend; and, though I boast not the name of Home, I can strike home as well as any of the name. I have galloped far and fast to deliver this packet to your hand."

"From whom?"

"Read, and learn for yourself. I fear you will not be able to decipher it by this light; if not, I can explain."

"Heavens! from the Ladies Sinclair! where—when—how?—Curses on this light, and on my own impatience! I shall never make out this scroll."

"I will tell you its import briefly, my Lord: the Ladies Sinclair call upon you, as a true knight, to rescue them from the Lord of Herdmanstone."

"Then my suspicions were well-founded. But where are they confined?"

"In the castle."

"Impossible! we searched every cranny of it."

"Ay, so you thought, Sir Knight; but there are lurking places within those walls that you wot not of; and the ladies were concealed, during your search, in a chamber, known only to the Lord of the Castle, and Dark Simon, his foster brother."

"How know you that?"

"From Dark Simon himself, who has been gained over by the kind bearing and liberal promises of the ladies, and whose choler has been stirred against his master by the threat of imprisonment."

"A blessing on his gloomy face!—we will do what we can to brighten it to him by and by. But who are you, my friend? Methinks your figure and voice are familiar to my eye and ear. By heaven! I am not mistaken!—Johnny Faa, give me your hand—you are a good man and true—I owe you a guerdon for this friendly act."

"Guerdon I require not, Sir Knight. Sufficient reward is it for me, to protect right against might, and to deliver innocence from the hands of the oppressor. But we have far to ride, Sir Patrick; and we will come better speed if we rest our jaded steeds for an hour. The moon will be up within that time, and by her light we will be able to follow the short path across the moor."

"'Tis wisely said; we must, however unwillingly, restrain our impatience." And, dismounting from his steed, he threw the bridle over its neck, and allowed it to wander at will. Sir Patrick's example was soon followed by the rest of the party; and, in a very short time, all, with the exception of the knight himself, gave evident and sonorous tokens that a little rest was as necessary for them as for their steeds. Restless and impatient, Sir Patrick paced up and down, longing for the appearance of the moon, to enable him to prosecute his journey; and the moment the first faint pale flash of light tinged the horizon, he roused his slumbering comrades.

"To horse! to horse!" shouted he; "we must not draw bit nor slacken girth again till we have the gathering cry of our house. Mount and ride! mount and ride!"

And, suiting the action to the word, he vaulted into his saddle, and, striking his spurs into his charger's flank, dashed off at a furious gallop, leaving the rest to follow as they might. It was early dawn when they arrived at Wedderburn, and scouts were immediately dispatched to summon the retainers of the house. In a few hours' time, the brothers Home, followed by a band of armed followers, were on their way towards Herdmanstone, burning for revenge. It was fortunate for them that Johnny Faa was with them—he restrained their impatience, and persuaded them to listen to the dictates of prudence, and moderate their speed; otherwise, in their eagerness to push onwards, both men and horses would have been jaded and exhausted before they arrived at their journey's end. By his advice they lay in ambush near the walls of Herdmanstone, and at daybreak, when the drawbridge was lowered, they made a sudden and furious attack upon the castle. At first, the assault was so unexpected and overpowering, that the vassals of Herdmanstone gave way beneath the shock; but they soon rallied, and closed around their lord. Far above the clash of swords and the clanking of battle-axes, were heard the cries of "A Home! a Home!" "A Sinclair! a Sinclair!" as each party shouted the battle cry of their house.

"Now, yield thee, Lord Sinclair," shouted Home. "Release the ladies, Sinclair, and I will withdraw my followers."

"Never!" answered he. "Let them starve in their concealment, if thou wilt; thou hast no clue to the place of their confinement."

"He has, tyrant, he has!" muttered a voice at his ear He turned round, and saw Dark Simon, holding in his hand the key of the secret chamber.

"Traitor!" shouted he, at the same time making a desperate blow at him with a battle-axe, which Simon actively eluded. "To the dungeon with him!"

"To hell's dungeon with thee!" said Simon, rushing in upon him, before he had recovered himself, and striking a dagger into his side.

"Curses, ten thousand curses on thy head!" groaned out Sinclair, as he fell; "am I to die at last by the hand of a base-born hind?"

The fall of the Lord of Herdmanstone disheartened his vassals, and inspired those of Wedderburne with fresh energy; many lives had been lost on both sides, and faint and few were now the cries of "A Sinclair! a Sinclair!" while the walls resounded with the loud and animated battle word of Wedderburne. At length, the besieged cried for quarter, which was immediately granted, and the combat ceased. Home approached the place where Lord Sinclair lay weltering in his blood and endeavoured to stanch the wound.

"'Tis all in vain," muttered the dying man; "I am going. But," gasped he, clutching Home feebly by the breast, and raising himself upon his elbow, "I have something to say, before I die. Home!—I—I *hate* you!" And, rolling upon his back, he expired.

Little more remains to be told. The ladies, of course rewarded their brave deliverers with their hands; and from their happy union descended the Barons of Wedderburn and the Earls of Marchmont.

THE GAME COCK.

"That's a bit bonny beastie, callant," said Walter Greenlaw, approaching a country lad, who was carrying a cock under his arm, and proceeding with it towards the village of Greystone; Walter being himself at the moment employed in taking his morning saunter on the Dumfries road, a recreation in which he always indulged in the summer time previous to opening his shop—a well-filled and thriving one, in the village above named.

Walter was in the grocery and spirit-dealing line, in which line he had done well. He was easy—easy in temper and circumstances; but, with regard to the former, just a trifle obstinate or so. Walter, in fact, notwithstanding his other good qualities, was as positive as a mule, and would never give in, when he once took a notion that he was right—and he did this in ninety-nine cases out of every hundred.

"A bit bonny beastie that, callant," said Walter Greenlaw, stopping the lad, and beginning to examine the bird's feet, spurs, comb, and other personal qualifications—for Walter was a bit of a connoisseur in such matters. He was a great cock fancier, and, though in other respects a sedate, regular, and humane sort of a man, entertained something like a predilection for cock-fighting. It was, in truth, rather a hobby of his; and was the only sort of pastime, if a thing so cruel can be called by that name, in which he indulged.

"Are ye gaun to sell him, laddie?" now inquired Walter who found the cock a bird of promise.

"I dinna ken, sir," replied the boy, stratching his head. "What wad ye gie's for him?"

"What wad ye be seekin?" rejoined Walter.

The boy thought a moment. "He's weel wordy o' twa shillings," he at length said.

"I'll gie ye aughteenpence," replied Walter, who was a dead hand at a bargain.

"Hae, tak him, then," said the boy, holding out the bird to the purchaser. Walter plunged his hand into his pocket, drew out one shilling and sixpence sterling money of this realm, put it into the boy's hand, took the cock under his arm, and retraced his steps homewards with his prize.

Ah, little did Walter know what mischief that unhappy cock was to breed him. Little did the unsuspecting man dream, that, in carrying it home, as he was now doing rejoicingly, he was carrying home ruin and distraction of mind. Who would have thought it more than Walter? Who would have thought that a thing so apparently simple should contain within it the germs of great events? Yet, so it was; and it adds another to the many instances already extant, of mighty endings proceeding from small beginnings, We need not add, we suppose, that if Walter had known to what that morning's work was to lead, he would as soon have taken a dose of prussic acid, as have bought the unlucky cock, of which he was now, in his ignorance, so vain.

Having brought his cock home, Walter carried him straight into his back shop, where it was his intention to keep him for a few days, that he might have him always under his own immediate eye, and be thus enabled to bestow upon him all due attention, without absenting himself for an instant from the duties of his shop. He was thus situated, too, in the most convenient place for undergoing such processes of training as might be deemed desirable.

For several days, everything went on well with Walter and the cock: the former discovering every day new points of excellence in the bird, and the latter every day exhibiting new and promising traits of character, and being apparently perfectly satisfied with his quarters. The cock and Walter were, therefore, on the best of terms with each other, and so they continued for about the time above-mentioned. At the end of this period, however, an unlucky circumstance occurred to disturb this pleasing harmony.

One day, while Walter was standing at his shop door looking listlessly around him, for lack of customers, he was suddenly startled by hearing a crash on the floor, first of one bottle, and then of another bottle, and then of a third and a fourth, in rapid succession, and, lastly, of a whole shower of them. The ruinous sounds proceeded from the back shop, where the cock was. Walter knew it, and rushed into the apartment; and when he did so, what a scene presented itself to his eyes. The floor was swimming six inches deep of his best strong ale, and was covered with the fragments of the bottles which had once contained it. Walter cast his eyes up to the shelf on which the ale formerly stood, to the amount of some twelve or fifteen dozen, and, to his unspeakable horror, found the cock boldly planted right in the middle of those that remained. Walter looked at the cock in silence for an instant; for he dared not make the slightest motion towards displacing him, as such attempt would only have insured the entire demolition of what bottles remained.

He, therefore, as we said, looked in silence and for some time on the ruthless destroyer of his property. Walter's look was one of unmitigated wrath. The cock returned it with one of bold defiance; chuckling and gluggering angrily the while, as if to say that, if his conduct was any way resented, he would do yet ten times more mischief. He seemed, in truth, perfectly conscious that he had still several dozens of ale at his entire disposal, and that a few more flaps of his wings was all that was necessary to send them down amongst the rest. Walter perfectly knew this too, and by his caution acknowledged himself to be completely in the power of the mischievous bird. For some time, then, the two looked at each other without making the slightest motion—Walter thinking of how he should proceed, and the cock evidently waiting to see what that proceeding should be, as if, whatever it was, he should thereby regulate his own conduct.

This, however, was a state of matters which could not be allowed to continue. The cock must be displaced—Walter both felt and saw that he must; and he finally resolved on attempting it. Approaching him cautiously, and with a coaxing and wheedling air, he aimed at closing with him; but it wouldn't do. The cock wasn't to be so taken in. The moment he saw Walter advancing upon him, he bridled up, gluggered fiercely, retreated into a thicket of bottles, and canted over another half-dozen in the operation. Rendered desperate by this continued destruction of his property, Walter, now losing all temper and prudence, seized a stick that lay at hand, and, regardless of consequences, rushed upon the destroyer, and, by this bold and decisive measure, cleared the shelf at once of the cock and of almost every remaining bottle that was on it. And thus ended the first exploit of Walter's new acquisition in the feathered line. The destruction was horrible; but there was no help for it—no remedy. To revenge it on the cock, was out of the question; so that all that befell him in consequence, was his removal to an out-house, where it was determined he should in future remain.

We have already said that cock-fighting was one of Walter Greenlaw's hobbies. It was so; and there were two or three persons in the village, and in the country around, who were addicted to the pastime also. These persons, and Walter along with them, used frequently to meet for the purpose of enjoying their favourite recreation, the scene of which was a certain barn in the neighbourhood; and, on these occasions, bets went frequently pretty high amongst them.

To these lovers of the main, it was soon known that their friend Mr Greenlaw had laid his hands upon a choice bird; game every inch of it, including the feathers; and much anxiety was expressed amongst them to see how he would conduct himself in battle; and not a little vain of this anxiety was the happy owner of the gallant bird, which was, in truth, a stately animal. His spurs were like two heckle pins, long and sharp, and most murderous looking; while his bold strut and lofty bearing shewed that he was worthy of his weapons, by giving assurance of his being both able and willing to make use of them.

Frequent, then, were the calls of the different members of the cock-fighting fraternity of Greystone on Mr Greenlaw, to see his bird, and to admire his proportions and combative capabilities—one and all declaring that he was a perfect paragon, a nonpareil, on which any sum might be safely staked. Walter thought so too, and felt rather anxious that some one would take him up. He would at once have gone a five pound note upon him; taking care, however, that his wife knew nothing about it.

At length, however, the desired event came round. Another of the fraternity, a farmer, lighted upon a cock, which both he and some of the others of the corps thought superior to Mr Greenlaw's; and the consequence was, a wager to the extent not of five but of ten pounds, so convinced was each of the merits of their respective cocks. A day of trial was appointed; the barn, the usual scene of such exhibitions, was the place fixed on. The parties and their friends met. The cocks were pitted against each other, and a deadly combat ensued. For a time Mr Greenlaw's cock fully maintained the character attributed to him and shewed such a decided superiority over his antagonist, both in severity of stroke and quickness of eye, that his owner, in the enthusiasm of the moment, doubled his bet,

and made it twenty pounds instead of ten. In the meantime, the battle raged with unabated ardour; victory hovering with doubtful wing between the combatants. At this interesting crisis, Walter, not seeing any doubt at all in the matter, felt as sure of his neighbour's twenty pounds as if he already had them in his breeches pocket. What, then, was his amazement, what his mortification, when he saw his redoubted cock all at once sport the white feather! He could scarcely believe his own eyes; but it was a fact, a melancholy fact. Walter's cock all at once drooped tail, and sought safety in disgraceful flight. The victorious cock gave chase, and pecked the fugitive round the ring. After this exhibition, there could be no doubt how the wagers were to go; and a nudge on the elbow from the winner awakened Mr Greenlaw to a sense of his particular position as regarded this matter. Mr Greenlaw took the hint, and, with slow hand and heavy heart, counted over his stake in good bank notes to the owner of the victorious bird. Shortly after this, Mr Greenlaw took his battered and crest-fallen cock under his arm, and, nearly as crest-fallen himself, commenced his march homewards; and as he did so—that is, while he walked home—he bestowed a good deal of thought on the general conduct of his cock; took a retrospective review, as it were, of his behaviour; and the result was an impression that he had got rather an unlucky sort of animal; for the debit of his account was swelling rapidly up, while there was not a single item at his credit. At this debit, there was his first cost, eighteenpence; then there was his keep, and the trouble therewith; then there was nearly a gross of Younger's best ale, bottles and all; then, and lastly—that is, so far as matters had yet gone—there were twenty pounds sterling money lost, gone for ever, through the cowardly spirit of the craven bird. All this was bad enough; but Walter still hoped matters might mend, and that the cock, by a little more judicious training, might be brought to refund in some shape or other; and, under this impression, Walter again took him in hand, and began a course of feeding, together with a series of other proceedings, all *secundum artem*, which he trusted would end in leading himself to cash, and his cock to glory.

At this stage of the history of Walter Greenlaw and his cock, we find it necessary to introduce another person on the stage; and this person is little Jamie Greenlaw, the son and heir of Walter—a wild, young scamp, and as fond of cock-fighting as his father. Now, this little rogue had long secretly desired to see a battle between his father's cock and the schoolmaster's, but had never been able to bring about the desirable event. At length, however, he accomplished it. He got up one morning very early, before any one was stirring; stole away his father's cock; carried him straight to the schoolmaster's; scaled the wall of his back yard; and, in a minute after, had the satisfaction of seeing the two cocks engaged in mortal strife. It was a *joust a' outrance*. Now, it happened, through that perversity which sometimes mark circumstances as well as conduct, that Walter Greenlaw's cock, on this occasion, fought nobly—that is, he fought well when it was of no consequence whether he did so or not. Yes, he fought well; so well that, in less than five minutes, he laid the schoolmaster's cock dead at his feet. This being a much more serious result than Jamie had anticipated, Jamie, in great alarm and perturbation, seized his own cock, placed him under his arm, and commenced a hurried retreat. This retreat, however, he did not effect without being seen. Standing in his shirt and red Kilmarnock nightcap, at a back window, the schoolmaster saw him; saw Jamie with his father's cock under his arm, and saw his own lying dead in the yard beneath the window—circumstances which at once conducted him to a knowledge of the facts of the case. On that very day, that fatal day, Walter Greenlaw received a written demand from the school master for the value of his cock; which value the said demand set forth to be three shillings and sixpence sterling money. Now, Walter demurred, nay, absolutely refused to pay, alleging that the schoolmaster's cock had fallen in fair fight. The schoolmaster insisted. Walter held out. The schoolmatser summoned. Walter appeared and stated his case; but judgment went against him. The schoolmaster was found, under all the circumstances of the case, entitled to the value of his cock, and Walter was therefore decerned against in the full amount, with expenses.

Now, at this point in the affair, or, perhaps, a little before, the very marked quality of Walter's nature, formerly hinted at, came into play—namely, his obstinacy. Walter protested against the decision now given against him, and brought his case under the revision of the Sheriff. It was again given against him, with additional expenses, a circumstance this, however, which only tended to convince Walter that *he* was right, and to confirm him in his determination to keep the flag of defiance and resistance, which he had hoisted, boldly flying; nay, he may be said to have now nailed it to the mast. In less than a month after, Walter's, or the game-cock case, was before the Court of Session. It became a question of costs; the judgment of the inferior courts was confirmed, and Walter was again cast, with the addition of a tail of expenses as long as a comet's. Never mind. "Do or die," was Walter's motto. He was still right, and they were all wrong—magistrates, sheriffs, and judges; and Walter determined on shewing them and the world that it was so. Walter carried his case into the House of Peers—where, O shade of Justinian, it was again given against him. Walter could do no more. He had done all that man could do to establish the fact that he was right, and that everybody else was wrong. But there was evidently a conspiracy against him. There was no justice to be had; so, consoling himself with the idea that he was a martyr to an iniquitous system of jurisprudence, Walter paid, with the best grace he could, the last shilling of the law charges which he had incurred in the game-cock case, and which amounted, altogether, to several hundred pounds.

On this being done—"What," said Walter, with a very long and a very grave face, to his better half, "what'll we do noo wi' the cursed brute?"—meaning the cock, which was at the moment strutting and crowing before the window as boldly and confidently as if he had never cost his owner a sixpence.

"What'll ye do wi' him," replied Mrs Greenlaw, sharply, "but thraw his neck, the confounded beast!"

"Feth, I believe ye're richt, guidwife," replied her husband, with a dismal smile.

The sentence of death thus passed on the cock was forthwith put in execution; and, on the following day, his mortal remains were served up at Walter's table, along with a tureen full of cocky-leekie.

"That's guid-lookin cocky-leekie, guidwife," said Mr Greenlaw, as he stirred with his spoon a reaming plate of the nutritious broth; "but nae better than it should be, considering the cost o't. Every sponfu' o't cost me a pound note, if it cost a farthin."

"Weel, I hope it'll cure ye o' cock-fechtin, Walter."

"As lang's I leeve," replied he. And he kept his word.

WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

MR HIGGINS IN THE HIGHLANDS.

Did ever any of our metropolitan readers—meaning, thereby, the city of London, not our own dear Modern Athens—observe a certain small, but rather tasteful, perfumery shop on the east side of Lombard Street?—We say, did any of our London readers—of whom, by the way, we are happy to say we have a great many—ever observe this little mart of odorous essences, Windsor soap, false curls, combs, tooth-brushes, and walking canes? If they have, they will doubtless have noted, from the sign over the doorway, that the said shop is kept by a Mr Joseph, or, as his familiars shortly called him, "Joe" or "Joey Higgins." This is the case, then, whether our readers have observed it or not. A shop, of the description we speak of, is where we have represented it to be, and the keeper of that shop is, as we have said, a Mr Joseph Higgins. Now, although our query implies that the reader might possibly have known such circumstances regarding Mr Higgins as those just stated, we are not so unreasonable as to expect that he should know much more about him. The remainder of the needful information concerning this very excellent person we purpose to supply ourselves.

Joey Higgins, then, be it known to all who take an interest in the matter, was a native of the city of London. We don't encourage impertinence by calling him, therefore, a Cockney; but, if we had so designated him, we would have called him one of the first water.

Joey, at the time we take up his history, was a young man of somewhere about six or seven and twenty years of age; liberal in his principles, and possessing a sharp eye for business.

In person, Joey was not particularly handsome. His stature was rather low and his legs rather thin to admit of his taking his place amongst the living Adonises of the day. In short, if truth must be spoken, Joey was rather an insignificant-looking person; but what of that?—He had a great soul, notwithstanding. In feature, expression, and complexion of countenance, Joey did not excel more than in elegance of limb. The first were disproportioned in dimensions—the mouth being too large, and the nose too long; the second spoke of nothing particular; and the last bordered on that delicate hue which has been called the cadaverous. Joey, however, was a smart fellow, nevertheless, and knew a thing or two which it was not every one that did.

Now, it will not surprise the reader to learn that Mr Higgins, seeing that the said Mr Higgins was in the prime of manhood, in fair worldly circumstances, and of a naturally sentimental turn of mind—we say, marking these considerations, it will not surprise the reader to learn, that he had selected from the crowd of fair maidens who sought to make themselves pleasant in his sight, one whom he thought he could love beyond all the rest. Neither would it surprise the reader, had he seen Miss Rowley, that she should have been the chosen of Mr Higgins; for she was, in truth, both a very smart and a very pretty girl.

Sincerely, then, did Mr Joseph Higgins love Miss Sophia Rowley; and, for some time, did Mr Joseph Higgins believe and truly that his love was returned by that lady. We say, for some time did he believe this; but it was for some time only. There was a snake in the grass, in the shape of a Mr Snawley. This gentleman, who was to business a poulterer, had long been intimate with the Rowleys, and was supposed to have a sheep's eye on Miss Sophia. She, however, had never encouraged his addresses. She was always glad enough to see him as a friend, but had no idea whatever of receiving him as a lover. This favour was reserved, apparently, for Mr Higgins. Matters, however, in this respect, gradually altered for the worse as regarded Mr Higgins, and for the better as regarded Mr Snawley. Miss Sophia began, and very strangely, to discover a partiality for the latter, and a corresponding indifference to the former. It was some time before Mr Higgins could ascertain the cause of this sudden and extraordinary change of sentiment on the part of his beloved, although much he pondered on the perplexing and heart-rending subject. At length, however, he discovered it. Snawley had taken captive the affections of Miss Rowley, as Othello did those of Desdemona, by recounting the dangers, by flood and field, which he had encountered in a trip to the Highlands of Scotland, from which he had, at the particular time of which we speak, just returned. At least to this cause, to the advantage which it gave Snawley over him in the opinion of Miss Rowley, as he conceived, did Mr Higgins attribute the change which had evidently taken place in that lady's affections.

Fully impressed with the belief that he had discovered the true cause, then, of Miss Rowley's new-born passion for his rival, and equally convinced that that cause was the one we have mentioned, Mr Higgins determined on a bold proceeding with regard to the matters of high concernment which it involved. He determined on foiling his rival with his own weapons—on recovering Miss Rowley's affections by precisely the same agency by which they had been lost. Mr Higgins determined, in short, on a trip to the Highlands too. But he resolved, at the same time, to keep his mind on this subject to himself—to say nothing at all about it until he had returned, when he purposed to confound Snawley, and captivate Miss Rowley, by a sudden outpouring of his newly acquired knowledge and experiences.

Acting on this spirited resolution, Mr Higgins presented himself on the Leith and Glasgow wharf, on a certain Saturday evening in the month of August 183–, and inquired, "Vitch vas the Victoria steamer?" She was pointed out to him by one of the men belonging to her, who happened to be near.

"Do you belong to the Victoria?" inquired Mr Higgins, eyeing the man scrutinizingly.

"I do, sir," was the reply.

"Vell then, my good feller," said Mr Higgins, "vill you have the goodness to give me a hand vith this here luggage of mine on board?" And Mr Higgins pointed to a pyramid of trunks, of all sorts and sizes, which he had constructed with some labour and ingenuity.

The man touched his hat, promised compliance, and, in a few minutes after, Mr Higgins and his trunks were safely on board the Victoria steamer. The appearance of

Mr Higgins himself—his dress, we particularly mean—was at once appropriate and imposing. It consisted of a shirt; bottle-green coat with brilliant buttons; a flaming red tartan waistcoat; ditto smalls, in honour of the country he was about to visit; a bright blue stock, with large bow; and a fur travelling-cap of the newest cut; massive gold chain, and bundle of seal, like smoothing irons, to match. Of such, then, was composed the outer shell of Mr Joseph Higgins, Perfumer, No. —, Lombard Street.

Having seen his luggage safely and properly stowed away, Mr Higgins descended to the cabin, and spent an agreeable quarter of an hour in contemplating his own captivating person in a large mirror which he found conveniently situated for such purpose. On this occasion, Mr Higgins was struck with the martial air which the tartans had imparted to his figure, and had no idea that he ever could have been made, by any contrivance of art, to look so like a warrior. It was a pleasant discovery, and Mr Higgins was hugely taken with it—the more so, that he had, two or three times, seen the play of "Rob Roy"—a circumstance which suggested certain comparisons between himself and that celebrated personage, of rather an agreeable description. Having obtained this new and pleasant light on his personal appearance, Mr Higgins returned to the deck, and, after taking two or three turns, sauntered towards the engine. Here his attention was attracted by the complicated machinery, of which he obtained a peep through the grating inserted in the deck. Having contemplated this wonderful achievement of art for some time in silent admiration, Mr Higgins, with a laudable curiosity, resolved on descending to the engine-room, that he might enjoy a fuller and closer inspection of the mysterious machine. Acting on this occasion with his usual spirit, our adventurous traveller immediately sought the proper place of descent; and, having first cautiously thrust one tartan leg and then another down the opening, and, having secured a firm footing for both, Mr Higgins drew down the remaining portion of his person, and, after a subsequent step or two, stood in the very heart, as it were, of the complicated machinery. There were, at this interesting moment, three or four men, in soiled fustians and with dismally-begrimed faces, busily employed at the engine at different points; each armed with a large handful of oily tow, of which they were making vigorous use as scourers and lubricators. Having gazed for a moment in silence on the operations that were going forward, Mr Higgins made the following pertinent remark to one of the men employed in the manner just described:—

"This is the hengine as makes the boat go, I s'pose?"

"I s'pose it is," replied the man, with a satirical sneer; "but the sooner you leave this the better, sir, for the engine's just going to be set on, and you may run the risk of a squeeze."

"Ah!" exclaimed Mr Higgins, in great alarm, and turning hurriedly round in order to make his escape by the way by which he had entered; but, long ere he could accomplish this, the engine started. Everything around him became suddenly instinct with life and motion. Wheels revolved, pistons worked, beams caracoled, rods and spindles jerked up and down with a clattering noise, or went round with rapid rotatory motion; and this, too, where all had been, but an instant before, perfectly still and steadfast. It was an alarming and perplexing predicament for Mr Higgins, who was but little conversant in the nature of steam-engines, and who had never in his life been involved in one before; and he felt it to be so. He had soon good cause to feel this more sensibly. We have said that the coat which Mr Higgins wore was a short one. So it was; but it was long enough for a certain little malicious pinioned wheel to lay hold of, as its wearer was retreating. Mr Higgins was caught by the skirts; and Mr Higgins soon felt that he was so, and instantly resented the liberty taken with his coat by resisting. The wheel insisted—that is, on having Mr Higgins' bottle-green short coat; and, apparently, on having Mr Higgins himself along with it. But there go two to a bargain—and the little wheel soon found this; for, while it pulled one way, Mr Higgins pulled another, until the dispute was finally adjusted or compromised by the little wheel's securing one-half of Mr Higgins' coat, leaving Mr Higgins in possession of the other. Finding himself restored to liberty by the operation which had just taken place, Mr Higgins rushed up the engine-room ladder, and, to the astonishment of his fellow-passengers, presented himself on deck in half a coat. The experience furnished to Mr Higgins by this visit to a steam-engine, suggested to him a wholesome rule for the guidance of his future conduct, which he determined to abide by. This was never to intrude himself again into the immediate society of moving machinery of any description whatsoever. Finding the half coat rather an awkward wear, Mr Higgins had now recourse to one of his trunks, from whence he extracted a smart, large-pocketed fustian shooting-jacket, with which he forthwith supplied the place of the demolished garment; and, thus renovated, mingled with the other passengers.

The ship was now under way, and was already fast lessening the distance between herself and the place of her destination; which, we need hardly say, we suppose, was the ancient port of Leith, regarding which the world has been so much edified through the medium of its renowned dock disputes. During the passage down, Mr Higgins was the life and soul of the company. He sang "Jim Crow," and "The King of the Cannibal Islands," with admirable spirit and effect, as also several other comic songs, of equal pretensions on the scores of humour and taste. Amongst those on whom Mr Higgins' agreeable and cheerful manners had made a favourable impression, was the worthy captain of the ship, who evinced the feeling just alluded to towards that gentleman, on the second day of their being at sea, by wagging on him with his forefinger from the door of his private apartment on deck. Mr Higgins, who was sauntering at a little distance at the time, saw the friendly signal and obeyed it. On his entering the apartment alluded to, the captain carefully shut the door, requested Mr Higgins to be seated, and then asked, with a hospitable smile, whether he had any objection "to splice the main-brace." Mr Higgins at once replied, that he would certainly do it if he could; but didn't exactly know what splicing the main-brace was.

"I'll shew you that presently, sir," said the captain, smiling; and he proceeded towards a small mahogany bottle-case which stood in a corner of the apartment, lifted it upon the table, drew out a bunch of keys from his pocket, selected one, applied it to the case, and threw open the lid; displaying a goodly assortment of bottles, filled with various liquors calculated for the support of sinking human nature.

"Rum, brandy, or gin, sir?" said the captain, laconically, and again smiling graciously on his guest.

"Oh! I see now—I understand," replied Mr Higgins, laughing. "This is splicing the main-brace, is it? Well, since you're so very good, I'll take a little brandy, if you please." And Mr Higgins did take a little brandy, and the captain took a little brandy, and Mr Higgins took a little *more* brandy, and the captain did the same thing, and the two got as thick as dog-heads.

We have said, or at least insinuated, that all this civility, on the part of the captain, to Mr Higgins, proceeded from a friendly feeling toward that gentleman; but we are not quite sure, after all, that this was really the case; for the captain was a bit of wag in his way; and Mr Higgins was, taking him altogether, as good a subject for butting as

might be met with. Be this as it may, it is certain that, in the course of the conversation which took place between the traveller and the sailor on the occasion of which we speak, the former discovered at once an ignorance and enthusiasm regarding Scotland, and everything Scotch, made so many absurd inquiries, and spoke, altogether, such a vast deal of nonsense on the subject, that the latter could not resist the opportunity of treating himself to a little amusement at his unsuspecting guest's expense. He, in short, *crammed* him most fearfully; giving him a vast deal of information which, if not remarkably accurate, was, at least, striking and interesting. Amongst the novelties of this kind was the captain's account of the altitude of the Highland hills, many of which, as he assured Mr Higgins, were twenty miles in perpendicular height, as sheer up and down as a wall.

"On all sides?" said Mr Higgins, in open-mouthed amazement.

"On all sides," replied the captain, gravely.

"Well, that does beat Richmond—beats it all to sticks," responded Mr Higgins.

"Ah! that it does," said the captain, with an air of *amor-patriæ* exultation.

To this picturesque account of the Highland hills, the captain added some particulars regarding the inhabitants, equally novel and interesting. He said that the greater part of them were cannibals, and went about in a state of primitive nudity. The veracious narrator next assured his auditor, that all the Edinburgh shopkeepers wore kilts, and that every one of the more respectable of them kept a piper playing at their shop-doors during the whole day; and concluded by recommending Mr Higgins to provide himself with an entire Highland dress, including sword and pistols, when he should reach Edinburgh, assuring him that it was necessary for his personal safety in perambulating the Highlands; and that it would, moreover, secure him a more friendly reception from those who had no design on his life.

"Wouldn't these do?" said Mr Higgins, thrusting out one of his tartaned legs, in order to shew the captain that he could already boast of some assimilation to the dress recommended.

"No, no, my dear sir," replied the captain; "the trowsers are all very well while you remain in a civilized part of the country, but nothing but the kilt will do for the savages. A kilt you must have."

Mr Higgins looked serious—not, altogether, at the idea of putting himself into a kilt—for that he rather liked on the whole—but at the terrible picture which his friend had drawn of the state of the country which he was going to visit. It had suggested to Mr Higgins, especially the cannibalism, some most unpleasant reflections, and he grew pale as he underwent their dire operation. His adventurous spirit had, in short, received a severe fillip. He felt, at that moment, as if he could resolve on giving up Miss Rowley for ever, rather than proceed farther in his perilous adventure. To be murdered—to be eaten like a South-Down wedder!—it was horrible. Mr Higgins thought it was, and there is, certainly, no gainsaying the opinion. But, then, Snawley! —the hated, the despised, the contemptible Snawley—was he to carry off Sophia? Was he to be allowed to rejoice, to revel, to luxuriate, in the honours of a deed which Joseph Higgins dare not do? Was he to be allowed to boast of an adventure to which Mr Joseph Higgins was unequal? Perish the idea! Mr Higgins said so too, and determined to proceed.

Recollecting the recommendation of the captain of the steamer, the first thing Mr Higgins did, on his arrival in Edinburgh, was to provide himself with an entire Highland dress—kilt, plaid, bonnet and feather, dirk, pistol, and broadsword. These paraphernalia having been all duly delivered at his lodgings by certain youthful members of the Albion Cloth Company, from which company they had been bought, Mr Higgins, on their arrival, snibbed the door of his bedroom, in which the warlike array had been deposited, and forthwith began to deck himself in the multifarious and complicated garb. This, however, he found by no means so easy a matter as he had imagined, or rather, he found in it a difficulty on which he had not at all counted—which he had overlooked. The dress, indeed, was there, but how to put it on?—Ay—there was the rub. Piece after piece of the dress did Mr Higgins take up, and piece after piece did he lay despairingly down again, without being able to form any idea whatever of either where or how they should be placed. Having thus handled them all over *seriatim*, turning them this way and turning them that, in the vain hope of discovering to what part of the person each was adapted, Mr Higgins gave up, for a time, the hopeless employment, seated himself in a chair, and gazed with a look of perplexity on the unintelligible, interminable, inextricable heap of tartans that lay before him. At length, struck with the idea that there could be no great harm in making a beginning somewhere, and that, in fact, a beginning must be made, Mr Higgins took up the hose, and, having denuded himself for impending operations, pulled them on carefully, drawing them high over his knees, where he secured them. Mr Higgins next took up the kilt, to which, after a great deal of trouble, he contrived to give the appearance of a petticoat, by twisting it round his person in such a way as to bring the skirts within a few inches of his ancles. Having got thus far, Mr Higgins next took up the plaid, which, being of simple form, he speedily disposed of, by tying it round his middle like a sash, although it did strike him that the knot by which he had secured it in this position, and which was about the size of a hat, was rather an unusual looking thing. But he could make no better of it. Mr Higgins having now clapped on the bonnet, buckled the sword and dirk to his side, and stuck the pistols in his belt, advanced to the mirror to contemplate the effects of his handiwork. He was, on the whole, highly pleased with the result. He looked awful, yet captivating—fierce, yet graceful—terrible, yet pleasing. Such were the antithetical sentiments regarding himself, with which the contemplation of his own figure in the mirror, on this occasion, inspired Mr Higgins.

We have hinted, however, that Mr Higgins' approbation of his own appearance, although warm, was not unqualified. It was not. He saw that there were several little matters connected with the adjustment of his dress which could not be just the thing, although he was unable to say, precisely, what was wrong, and, still less, how the errata were to be remedied.

Trusting to having all this amended on a future day Mr Higgins began to undo all that he had done. He began to strip; and having completed this operation, resumed his own more proper dress, and, thereafter, stowed away his Highland gear into one of the multitudinous trunks by which he was accompanied.

During the two succeeding days, Mr Higgins employed himself very agreeably in viewing the beauties of the Modern Hathens, as he had learned to call this, our good city of Edinburgh. He ascended to the summit of the Calton 'Ill, and was confounded at the extent of the prospect it commanded. He had never seen anything so well got up, excepting once at Saddler's Wells; the scene exhibited on which occasion, however, he thought rather beat it on the whole. There "vas more vood, and not so much vater;" and then, in the latter case, there was thunder and lightning, which greatly added to the general effect. Now, there was nothing of the kind when he was on the Calton Hill; it being a fine, clear, sunshiny day. Mr

Higgins thought, too, that the whole scene would have looked fully better under gas-light, and wondered that there was no contrivance to shew it off at nights, by the aid of that useful and brilliant commodity.

Mr Higgins would fain have tried the ascent of Arthur's Seat; but it looked so appallingly high, so wild and rocky, so sharp at the top, and had, altogether, such a resemblance to Mont Blanc, of which he had read some terrible accounts, that his "'art" sank within him as he thought of it. He did not feel quite sure either that it might not be the haunt of some of those cannibals of whom the captain of the Wictoria had spoken. Taking all these things into consideration, then, and viewing the adventure in all its different lights, Mr Higgins came to the conclusion, that it would be safer not to attempt it. The bold idea was, therefore, abandoned.

We have elsewhere hinted that the account of the savage state of the Highlands, which Mr Higgins had received from the veracious authority formerly spoken of, had considerably damped that gentleman's spirit of adventure. It had so. Nay, he could not conceal from himself that he was under the positive influence of an annoying feeling of reluctance to prosecute his journey. Vague and undefined terrors—not the less painful that they were so—bearing reference to that unknown land, which he had so rashly undertaken to visit, haunted his waking and sleeping thoughts, and summoned up before his mind's eye, visions of the most horrible and appalling kind. But, then, Snawley! Ay, Snawley. Recollect him. Mr Higgins did recollect him; and, recollecting him, Mr Higgins buttoned up his coat to the throat, struck down his hat firmly on his forehead, and determined to proceed. Having thus a second time screwed his recreant courage to the sticking place, Mr Higgins made a series of inquiries as to his best mode of procedure; that is, as to what should be his best route for his meditated descent on the Highlands. He was informed that he might choose from severals. He might go west, or he might go north, or he might choose two or three several different points between. The result of the entire information which Mr Higgins received on this subject, was to determine him to take the steamboat to Stirling, as being the route which would soonest bring him to the land of the "mountain and the flood."

Mr Higgins now bade adieu to Edinburgh for a time—not, however, without carrying away with him a feeling of surprise at not having seen a single shopkeeper in a kilt, nor a single piper at any shop door, during the whole time of his sojourn in the city, notwithstanding the very full, particular, and positive information which his friend the captain had given him on these subjects. He thought it odd, and began to be favoured with a glimmering of the real facts of the case, and to suspect that his worthy friend had subjected him to the interesting operation called trotting. Mr Higgins' faith, then, in the captain's representations, was now pretty considerably shaken, especially as regarded the particular just alluded to; but as to other matters, it still remained firm enough to induce him to resolve on walking cautiously and warily as regarded his future proceedings.

In due time, Mr Higgins arrived at the ancient town of Stirling, and without any accident or event of the slightest moment occurring to disturb the equanimity of either himself or fellow-passengers. Having landed, Mr Higgins conveyed himself and his array of trunks to the head inn of the place, and established himself in one of its snuggest parlours. Thus quartered, he summoned the waiter into his presence, and was rather surprised, seeing that he was so close upon the Highlands, to find that official wearing breeches, and presenting, in other respects, a perfectly civilized and Christian-like appearance. Indeed, externally, he saw no difference between him and the waiter at the sign of the "Three Tankards and Buttock of Beef," in Poulterer's Alley, London. But appearances are deceitful, as everybody knows, and as Mr Higgins knew too. He might be but a savage in disguise. Impressed with the possibility of this being the case, Mr Higgins, keeping at a respectful distance from him, prepared to precognosce him, and began the operation by putting the searching query, whether he could speak Henglish.

The waiter smiled, and replied that he could.

"Ah, vell then, I say," rejoined Mr Higgins, "vare do you belong to? Wat part of the country do you come from?"

"I be's vrom Lancashire, zur," replied the waiter.

"Wat! a Henglishman!" exclaimed the surprised, delighted, and greatly relieved Mr Higgins. "Vy, now, that is hodd. I had no hidear of finding a countryman in this houtlandish part of the vorld. I say, now, vat's your name, countryman?"

"Tom Oatley, zur."

"Ah! vell, now, I say, Tom, do they keeps any sort o' wittals in this 'ouse?—Have they anything besides hoatmeal and hunions?"

Tom smiled. "Oh, yez, zur," he replied, "plenty. You'll find this 'ouse as vell wittaled as any 'ouse in England."

"Vere do they gets it?" inquired Mr Higgins, curiously.

"Vy, in the market, to be sure, zur," said Tom, again smiling.

"Wat! Leadenhall?" exclaimed Mr Higgins, surprisedly. "That's surely too far off, aint it?"

"Ah, to be zure it is, zur," rejoined Tom; "but we doesn't require to go so far. We 'ave plenty at home here—good markets, and well filled."

"Oh! you 'ave, 'ave you?" said Mr Higgins, in much astonishment. "Vell, that is queer, now. I had no hidear.—Vell, then, I say, Tom, my good fellar, vill you turn me up summut to heat, as fast as you like, for I'm devilish sharp-set."

Tom bowed, and retired.

In a few minutes after, the little table that stood in the centre of the apartment was covered with various good things in the victualling department, produced for the special purpose of contributing to the sustenance and general bodily comfort of Mr Joseph Higgins.

Mr Joseph Higgins drew in his chair; and, when Mr Joseph Higgins had done this, Mr Joseph Higgins lifted the cover off a tureen, and helped himself to a ladlefull of its contents. Mr Higgins looked at these contents, at least the portion of them that lay on his plate, and he looked at them with some surprise. They had a strange appearance. It was the oddest-looking soup Mr Higgins had ever seen. A heterogeneous mass of vegetables, carrots, turnips, leeks, onions, barley, parsley, and cabbage, all mingled together in strange association. It was so thick too, that the spoon might stand in it. Mr Higgins, after some hesitation, dipped into the mysterious dish, and warily tasted of it. He managed one spoonful, tried a second, but, fairly broke down at the third. It wouldn't do. He could not go on.

Finding this, Mr Higgins thrust aside his plate, and drew another dish towards him. He removed the cover; and, to his great delight, a huge, smoking dumpling, or plumpudding—he was not quite sure which—presented itself to view. This article being one of a species with which Mr Higgins had long cultivated an intimate and familiar acquaintance, he at once, and unhesitatingly, plunged his knife into its very centre—a proceeding which the dumpling instantly acknowledged by sending forth a powerful jet of thick, semi-fluid matter, that took Mr Higgins precisely on the right eye. Mr Higgins paused in astonishment at the unexpected spirit of the dumpling. He had never seen a dumpling play such antics before; but, after a

moment, wiped his eye, and returned to the charge. He again plunged his knife into the contumacious dish, and now gave a bold cut downwards, preparatory to taking an inner slice. Such, then, was Mr Higgins' intention on the present occasion; but what was Mr Higgins' amazement to find the track of his knife instantly filled up, and overwhelmed as fast as it was drawn, by a gushing, lava-like flood of—of—of—Mr Higgins did not know what the devil what! Mr Higgins here paused in his operations, threw himself back in his chair, and gazed in silent wonderment on the edible phenomenon before him. At this moment, Tom Oatley entered the apartment.

"I say, Tom," said Mr Higgins, pointing to the dish he had been contemplating, "what sort of a dumpling is that?"

"Dumpling, zur?" exclaimed Tom, laughing. "Lord love you, zur, that ain't a dumpling! That be a 'aggis—a Scotch 'aggis."

"Oh, an 'aggis—an 'aggis, is it!" said Mr Higgins. "I've 'eard of the article afore, but never seen one. Vell, then," continued Mr Higgins, and now pointing to the tureen, "what sort of soup is that there?"

"That ain't zoup, zur," replied Tom. "That is Scotch broth."

"Oh, I've 'eard of that, too!" rejoined the now enlightened Mr Higgins—"but never saw it before either. Vell, Tom," resumed Mr Higgins, after a moment's pause, "I'll tell you wat it is—I'll 'ave none of your 'aggis nor your broth; but I'll make *my* dinner—and, I expect, a very good un, too—on this here fowl." And Mr Higgins drew himself smartly towards the table again, seized his knife and fork with a renewed vigour of determination; and, in a very short time, accomplished the achievement to which he had so spiritedly pledged himself.

On the following day, Mr Higgins started per coach for Callendar; it being his intention to make his debut in the Highlands at the "Trousacks"—acting, in this matter, agreeably to directions given him at Stirling by his countryman, Tom Oatley.

Having reached Callendar, Mr Higgins betook himself again to the principal inn—for Mr Higgins always loved to do the thing genteelly when he was travelling; and, when he had done so, one of his first inquiries at the girl who attended him was, if she knew of any person who was well skilled in the proper manner of putting on the Highland dress; and if such a person, if to be had, would come to assist him to array himself in that garb. From these queries, the reader will perceive that Mr Higgins thought he had now arrived at the point where he ought to assume the dress with which he had provided himself at Edinburgh, and that he had come to a resolution conform thereto. From the queries just quoted, the reader will also perceive that Mr Higgins was fully sensible of his own deficiency as regarded the proper putting on of "tartan array," and that he was resolved to supply this deficiency by employing the aid of a person skilled in the art. The girl to whom Mr Higgins put the questions above set forth, was rather at a loss, at first, to comprehend them. They were unusual. Being a shrewd lass, however, she soon fully understood what Mr Higgins would be at; and now at once replied to his queries in the affirmative. She said "Tat bos her broder and her broder's broder's broder knew't it well hoo to put on ta philibeg, and ta hose, and ta plaid. No mans in Perthshire knew't petter; and they would pe prood to help her Honour to put on ta tartans."

Mr Higgins, well pleased with this information, said—"All right, then, my gal. But I'll not require so many of your brothers. One will do for me. Won't it?"

"Och! to pe surely, your Honour. But I'll have only two broder."

Mr Higgins was surprised at a piece of information which assorted so ill with the prodigious outpouring of the word "broders," as above recorded; but he soon ascertained, by a little cross-questioning, that the girl simply meant two of her brothers. On coming to this understanding, Mr Higgins desired her to send one of her "broders" to him forthwith—having previously ascertained, although not much to his satisfaction, that the person about to attend him was a Highlander. He had, however, the girl's assurance—though it is doubtful if she knew precisely what she said when she gave it, to a pointed inquiry of Mr Higgins—that he was perfectly tame. Tame or not, however, he very soon appeared. But there were two of them—Duncan M'Gillivray and his brother John. They had both come—that is, the girl's two brothers; and appalling looking fellows—at least in Mr Higgins' sight—they were. The men were both upwards of six feet in height, and tremendously whiskered. Mr Higgins leaped, at one bound, to the opposite side of the room, when they entered, but commanded himself sufficiently to avoid any farther exposure of the state of his feelings; and no future risk of this occurred; for the men conducted themselves with a mildness and modesty of manner that not only restored Mr Higgins to perfect composure, but maintained him in this happy frame of mind. It had an effect beyond this. It made him think it hardly possible that such men should be addicted to cannibal indulgences. The brothers having announced the purpose of their visit—which, however, was hardly necessary—Mr Higgins went to the trunk which contained his Celtic toggery; and, turning out the various articles, submitted himself to the hands of his tiring men.

"Oich! oich!" said one of the men, in Gaelic, to the other, as he gartered one of Mr Higgins' hose, "what a leg for a kilt! It's no thicker than a whip-shaft, and has no more shape than a drumstick. Oich! oich! such spindle-shanks were never intended to be either hosed or kilted."

"He's a miserable bit body," was the according reply to these remarks on the personal structure of Mr Higgins "Handle him gently, Donald, for fear you break him."

In the meantime, Mr Higgins, unconscious of the flattering opinions thus expressed of his physical qualifi cations, was contemplating the gradual developement of his figure in its new guise with great satisfaction.

At length the labours of his assistants were completed, and Mr Higgins stood forth, plaided and plumed in all the dignity of tartan array. It was a proud moment for Mr Higgins, and he felt all its inspiration. He paid the men liberally, and engaged them to come to him on the following morning to render him the same service which they had just performed; for, on the following morning, he had resolved to set out for the "Trousacks." The remainder of the day on hand, it being now too far gone to think of any distant excursion, he meant to occupy in displaying his person to the natives of the village of Callendar; and this he subsequently did, to the great edification of that particular portion of his Majesty's subjects.

The following morning, agreeably to what has been said above, found Mr Higgins, at an early hour, again fully equipped in his Celtic toggery. He was now ready for a serious start, and he soon after made it, and he did so under the impression that he would be taken for the Duke of Athol, or Glengarry at the very least.

Mr Higgins then took the road for the Trossachs, and he took it all alone; but he had taken care to be carefully instructed as to his route, previous to starting on his daring adventure.

For about a couple of hours or so, Mr Higgins got on swimmingly. He found his way without difficulty, and had the satisfaction of astonishing several of the natives as he went along. He saw them looking after him, and he had no doubt that it was with admiration.

We have said, that for about two hours Mr Higgins got on pleasantly. He did so. But at the end of that time Mr Higgins began to suspect that he had, somehow or other, got out of his proper course, for he found himself all at once in a very wild and solitary place, at a great height above the proper level of the world; for he saw it far below him, and without any trace of road, or sign of human habitation. In this dilemma Mr Higgins all at once stood fast, and began to look anxiously around him, to see if he could by any means make out where he was, through the medium of a reference to the directions he had received previous to starting.

But Mr Higgins could make nothing of it. He could see nothing, to use his own elegant vernacular, but "'ills and 'ether all round." It was an alarming case, to be thus alone, and lost, as it were, in a wild and barbarous land, surrounded with all sorts of difficulties and dangers—precipices, bogs, lakes, savages, and woods. Oh, what would not Mr Higgins have given at that moment to have been behind his own counter in Lombard Street? Why, he would have given a ten gallon cask of lavender, or half-a-dozen quart bottles of ottar of roses, or a ton of Windsor soap, or any other respectable quantity of any other of the commodities in which he dealt. But neither lavender, nor ottar of roses, nor Windsor soap, even though he had had these articles at command, could be of the smallest service to him in his present unhappy predicament. A little presence of mind and fortitude would have been worth them all put together. But Mr Higgins had no great stock of these either about him, and the little he had was now fast evaporating. To add to Mr Higgins' horror and confusion, a dense mist at this moment settled down on the spot on which he stood, and shut out, as Mr Higgins dreaded, the smiling world for ever. He could not see a "bit about him"—as he used afterwards to say, when speaking of this adventure amongst the "'Eeland 'ills"—no more than if a blanket had been thrown over him.

Desperate, however, as was Mr Higgins' mind, it retained sufficient discretion to suggest to him the propriety of making a movement in some direction or other, rather than continue standing where he was, in hopeless and useless inactivity. Obeying the suggestion, Mr Higgins put himself cautiously in motion, thus commencing something like a game of blind man's buff with the hills and rocks around him. At this pastime Mr Higgins had continued for about an hour, without obtaining, during all that time, the slightest glimpse of either his where or whereabouts, when he was suddenly startled by a loud and shrill whistle. Mr Higgins thought of Roderick Dhu—for he had read "The Lady of the Lake"—and had no doubt that the glen through which he was just now groping his way, was about to be "garrisoned" for his especial destruction. Visions of dirks, pistols, claymores, and Rob Roys, flitted before his distracted vision, and shook his little tartaned frame like an aspen leaf. It is true, Mr Higgins had a sword by his side, and a dirk by his side, and pistols in his belt; and that he might, in consequence of being in possession of these lethal weapons, have felt a little more confidence than he did; but Mr Higgins, neither now nor at any time, had ever dreamt of appealing, under any circumstances, to these deadly instruments. They were intended merely for show. Indeed, so far as regarded the pistols, they were useless, for Mr Higgins had neither powder nor ball; and the broadsword he could not draw, excepting by the tedious operation of taking it entirely off, and then drawing, not the blade out of the sheath—for it was by far too long for that, at least with reference to the length of his arms—but by drawing the sheath away from the blade. Reasons then, there were sufficient, both in number and in quality, why Mr Higgins should have found no comfort in the murderous weapons with which he was stuck round.

In the meantime, symptoms of an impending catastrophe of some sort were becoming every moment more frequent and manifest. The alarming whistles were repeated over and over again, as if being answered from different points, and were now and then varied by a wild "halloo." Mr Higgins was now fairly encircled by the savages. Of this there could be no doubt; and Mr Higgins *had* no doubt of it, nor that his fate was now about to be sealed in blood. If any doubts had, however, remained on Mr Higgins' mind as to this matter, they were now fatally dispelled by the sudden appearance from behind a rock of a ferocious figure in bonnet, kilt, and plaid, and carrying a long fowling piece in his hand. The figure, looking all sorts of terrible things at Mr Higgins, fiercely accosted him, but in a language which Mr Higgins did not understand; and as Mr Higgins did not understand it, he could make no reply to it; but he looked all the humiliation he could, in order to deprecate the wrath of the kilted monster before him. It did not appear, however, that the silent eloquence of Mr Higgins had much effect on the savage; for he repeated his inquiry, as it seemed to be, with increased ferocity; and Mr Higgins, at the same moment, distinctly heard the click of the lock of his fowlingpiece. In the next instant Mr Higgins was on his knees in an attitude of desperate supplication. The savage grinned, put his finger and thumb in his mouth, and gave another of his appalling whistles. In a minute after, or, probably, somewhat less, he was joined by other three savages as wild and ferocious looking as himself. On seeing Mr Higgins, and marking the position he was in, the new comers set up a hideous laugh, in which they were joined by the first savage. Having enjoyed themselves in this way for a few moments, they all four approached Mr Higgins, and, after a word or two of consultation amongst themselves, which they held in the unknown tongue already referred to, they seized him, bound a handkerchief over his eyes, and, thereafter, each grasped a limb of the unfortunate traveller, and, lifting him bodily off the ground, hurried him away, his broadsword trailing behind him, as, thus borne, he skimmed along he knew not whither. Mr Higgins, however, was not carried off unresistingly—he struggled violently; and loudly and imploringly prayed for mercy. But neither his struggles nor his cries stood him in the smallest stead; he might as well have appealed to the rocks around him, as to the indurated hearts of those into whose merciless hands he had fallen. Indeed, if anything, the former were the softer of the two. While the savages were thus carrying Mr Higgins along, which, by the way, they did with much glee, and many a ferocious laugh and jest, two of their number kept up a running fire of broken English, as if with a view of giving their victim some knowledge of the motives and purposes of their proceedings towards him.

"Ta tam Sassenach kauger!" said one; "we'll kive him a taste of ta Heelan purn will do him goot."

"Oich oich, ta tirty pody!" said the other, "to put such legs as these in ta hose an' ta kilt, to pring a disgrace on ta country!"

"Traw your soort, man," said the first, speaking *at* the helpless Mr Higgins; "traw your soort, man, and cut us all town."

"Oich, oich, he'll pe petter at handlin a yard-stick than a soort, I'm thinkin," replied the other.

While such conversation as this was going on, the party suddenly halted. Each now shifted their gripe of Mr Higgins to the furthest extremity of his several limbs, and, after duly balancing him, commenced swinging him backwards and forwards, with a pretty easy but vigorous motion. At the third or fourth oscillation, Mr Higgins was discharged from the grasp of his murderers, by a simultaneous jerk, which sent Mr Higgins through the air like a bomb-shell. In the next instant Mr Higgins was plunging and

floundering in a pool of clear, dark water, of somewhere about six feet in depth; and in this pool Mr Higgins plunged and floundered until he lost all consciousness of his situation, and until he had entirely ceased making any further efforts to protract the span of his valuable existence. When Mr Higgins awoke from his lethargy, when he opened his eyes again on this world of care and trouble—a thing which he never expected to do—Mr Higgins found himself in bed at his inn in Callendar. Those who had thrown him into the pool as already described, and who, we need hardly say, we suppose, were a party of smugglers, who had taken Mr Higgins for a newly imported English officer of excise, several of whom had lately come to that part of the country—those, then, we say, who had thrown him into the pool, had taken him out again, but not until they had seen that he was within a trifle of giving up the ghost altogether. Having marked his approach to this critical point, one of them plunged into the water, and dragged Mr Higgins ashore. They then carried him to, and left him "to dry," as one of them facetiously said, on a sunny bank close at hand, where he was shortly after found by some people who were proceeding to Callendar with a couple of empty carts, in one of which Mr Higgins was deposited, and thereafter conveyed to the destination which we have represented him as having unconsciously arrived at, where he was stripped of his tartans and warlike weapons, and put to bed, as already indirectly intimated. For two days after this unhappy adventure, Mr Higgins continued in so low a state that he could take no sustenance whatever, excepting half a glass of wine now and then. On the third day, however, Mr Higgins began to shew palpable signs of recovery. He was still very weak and faint, but was, on the whole, coming rapidly round again. His attentive landlady, marking the signs of improvement that now exhibited themselves, gently approached Mr Higgins' bed on the third morning after his accident, and, drawing aside the curtains, asked him, in a kindly tone, if there was anything that he could think of that he should like to eat. Mr Higgins paused a moment ere he replied; but at length murmured, in feeble tones, that he thought he could fancy a dish of "stoo'd heels."

"A dish of what, sir?" said his landlady.

"Stoo'd heels," again murmured Mr Higgins.

"Heels, sir!—what's that?"

"Vy, don't you know vat a heel is?" replied Mr Higgins, faintly, but a little testily. "I thought everybody knew vat a heel vas."

"Is it cowheel ye mean, sir?" inquired his impervious hostess.

"No, no," rejoined Mr Higgins, impatiently, "the heels vat swims."

"Oh! eels, eels," exclaimed the now enlightened landlady, rejoicingly. "Oh, yes, sir, yes. We'll get them for ye, although we are no in the habit o' eatin them, however. We think them ugly brutes, and no fit for Christian fude; but it's a' matter o' taste, I dare say. And hoo, noo," continued his hostess, "wad ye like to hae them made ready, sir?"

"Vell, now, didn't I tell you that afore, missis?" replied Mr Higgins, still more impatiently—"stoo'd, stoo'd."

The process thus named was unintelligible to the landlady of the "Highland Piper;" but, by dint of a little gentle cross-questioning, she at length made out that *stewed* eels was the dish desired by her guest; and, having done so, immediately retired to adopt measures for procuring the desiderated luxury.

Stewed eels was rather a novelty at Callendar; and much astonishment, and, we may add, no little disgust did it excite in two or three natives who happened to be drinking in the kitchen of the "Highland Piper," when the process of preparing the eels for the stew-pan was going on—the said eels having been procured from a neighbouring mill-dam by the landlady's son. Amongst those who witnessed the proceding above spoken of, were three Highland drovers, who were seated at a small round table, on which was bread, cheese, and a measure of mountain dew. These worthies eyed, for some time, in silent amazement, and with some strong manifestations of loathing, the various operations of the cook on the bodies of the defunct eels. They at first never dreamt, however, that they were meant to be eaten; but when this became obvious, from their being deposited in the pan in which they were to be prepared, the drovers could no longer restrain the feelings of horror and disgust the idea excited. Every face became distorted with agony. One hastily filled up and swallowed a bumper of whisky, to arrest the progress of an incipient squeamishness of which he became sensible; another grew pale in the face; and the third fairly ran to the door, under the oppression of a sickness which threatened awkward consequences.

"Whose goin to eat these apominable brutes, Mrs M'Morlan?" said the drover who had taken the dose of mountain dew as above mentioned.

"A shentleman up stairs, Neil," replied the landlady of the "Highland Piper."

"Myself would as soon eat a frocs or a serpents, Mrs M'Morlan," rejoined the drover, with a shudder. "Och, och, the tirty, ockly brutes! Where the shentleman will pe from? He'll no pe of this country, surely?"

"Och, no, he's a Sassenach podie, Neil," replied Mrs M'Morlan. "He'll pe from London."

"I was thocht so," said Neil, complacently; "I'll never hear of a Christian man eatin such foods as that."

While this conversation was in progress, the stew-pan on the fire with the eels was getting on merrily; and, in a short time thereafter, the latter were in a fit state for the table. On their being so, they were served up to Mr Higgins, who ate heartily of them; and from that moment felt himself a new man. He felt, in fact, all but quite recovered from the effects of his late adventure. Finding himself in this improved condition, Mr Higgins began to take into his most serious consideration what should be his next proceeding; and the result of his cogitations on this subject was, that he should forthwith return home without making any further attempt on the Highlands, the visiting of which he was now satisfied was every whit as dangerous an enterprise as penetrating the wilds of Africa. Mr Higgins, then, determined on retracing his steps homewards, and that with as little delay as possible. He, indeed, regretted that he must thus necessarily return with much less to boast of, as to what he had seen in the Highlands, than he could have wished, and he felt that Snawley would still have greatly the advantage of him in this respect; for that gentleman—at least according to his own account—had climbed every mountain and seen every lake in the land of the Gael that was worth the trouble of visiting. This reflection was rather galling to Mr Higgins; but, then, Snawley had met with no such terrible adventure as he, Mr Higgins, had. He had nothing so striking as the encounter with the savages to tell—nothing approaching to it. This incident, then, was a set-off against the wider and more varied experiences of Snawley, and rendered their travels, on the whole, as Mr Higgins thought, about equal on the score of interest.

His mind made up on the subject of his future proceedings, Mr Higgins summoned his landlady to his presence, to pay his bill, and make some inquiries as to modes of conveyance.

Obedient to the summons of her guest, Mrs' MMorlan made her appearance in Mr Higgins' parlour. On her entrance—

"I am going to return home, Mrs M'Morlan," said Mr Higgins. "I don't intend going any farther into the 'Eelands."

"That's a pity, sir, since you came so far to see't," replied mine hostess, smilingly.

"Yes, yes; perhaps it is," said Mr Higgins; "but it's a barbarous country, Mrs M'Morlan, begging you ten thousand pardons—a barbarous country, and I can't think of 'aving any more to do with it. Besides, I *'ave* seen a 'ill or two, and some 'ether, and some rocks, and, I suppose, that's all that's to be seen in the 'Eelands worth seeing. But, I say, Mrs M'Morlan," continued Mr Higgins, "wy haven't you got police in the 'Eelands, to keep the peace, and protect travellers from the savages. There, now, if there had been a party of B division stationed on the 'ill w'ere I was attacked, I would 'ave been safe enough—the ruffians daren't have touched me—I would 'ave given 'em in charge directly, and had 'em before the magistrate."

Not seeing very distinctly what Mr Higgins meant or would be at, Mrs M'Morlan, on his concluding, merely smiled, and muttered some unintelligible expressions, apparently of acquiescence in his views. She, however, ventured to recommend his visiting some of the more remarkable scenery in the immediate neighbourhood of the village, before leaving; naming several localities distinguished for their romantic beauty.

"Not a foot, ma'am, not a foot further shall I go, although it were to make me a halderman," replied Mr Higgins, energetically. "I vont, indeed, ma'am. Now, waut is my leetle beel, ma'am, if you please?"

The "leetle beel" was produced, mine hostess having previously withdrawn for a few minutes for the purpose of having the desiderated document drawn out—and settled—handsomely settled; for Mr Higgins was no niggard—he paid liberally; and, in the present instance, with a grateful recollection of his landlady's kind attention to him during his confinement, and a pleasing reminiscence of her "stoo'd heels," he was even more liberal than usual.

In less than an hour after this adjustment of matters between Mr Higgins and mine hostess of the "Highland Piper" had taken place, the former took his seat in the Stirling coach, and was, soon after, safely deposited in his old quarters in the town just named.

Here Mr Higgins had some very interesting conversation with his countryman, Tom Oatley, on the subject of the Highlands, on their barbarity, their savages, their uncivilized condition, and dreadful want of a regular and efficient police.

More experienced in Highland travel, and more conversant with its actual state than Mr Higgins, Tom smiled at the greater part of the former's observations and remarks on these subjects, and respectfully hinted that many of them were but a trifle removed from the absurd.

"Ah, vell, you may say as you likes, Tom," said Mr Higgins, in reply to some of these hints; "but I knows wat I knows. I knows wat I 'ave seen, and you can't deny that; nor nobody can. It's an infernal place, and that's the short and the long of it. But you've been used to it, Tom, and that's the way you think nothing of it."

Tom acknowledged there might be some truth in the remark; and with this acknowledgment the conversation dropped.

On the following day, Mr Higgins took steamer for Newhaven, and, on the day succeeding, embarked once more on board the "Wictoria," with London for his destination.

After a pleasant passage of some fifty hours' duration, Mr Higgins found himself within the sound of Bow bells; and, in less than half an hour more, stood on the Leith and Glasgow wharf, as, we think, the landing place appropriated to the Leith and London steamers is called. Here Mr Higgins stood, we say—and stood, too, on the precise spot, or very nearly, which he had, for a moment, adorned exactly three weeks before, when about to start on that daring adventure from which he had now returned.

Having collected his various packages around him, Mr Higgins took immediate measures for their removal and his own. Mr Higgins called a coach, popped his luggage into it, and then popped into it himself. Having done this, he told the coachman to drive to No. —, Lombard Street.

In a few minutes after, Mr Higgins was set down before his own shop door; in a few minutes more, Mr Higgins was again behind his own counter, and in the exercise of his lawful calling; for, just as he had taken his place, a customer came in and bought a cake of Windsor soap. On his departure, Mr Higgins rubbed the palms of his hands together with great glee, looked around his well stocked shop with an air of much complacency and satisfaction, and inwardly thanked his stars that he was there once more.

It was Mr Higgins' intention, on the day of his arrival in London, to proceed, before going anywhere else, to the habitation of his beloved Miss Rowley—to call upon her first, while the bloom of adventure was yet fresh, full, and untouched upon him; but, on reflection, a better and brighter idea came across him. This brilliant idea was, to pay his first visit to his inamorato arrayed in the mountain garb which he had brought with him from Scotland—in the full costume of the warlike Celt.

Agreeably to this resolution, Mr Higgins delayed his intended call till the following evening, when, "all plaided and plumed in his tartan array," he presented himself at Miss Rowley's door, looking as fierce as possible, but mingling with the expression of that desperate disposition, a smile of urbanity, as from a humane wish not to frighten people altogether out of their senses.

On opening the door to Mr Higgins, the girl who performed that office uttered a loud scream of terror, and flew into the interior of the house. Gratified by this testimony to the terrors of his appearance, Mr Higgins walked smilingly, but with stately step, after her; and, without ceremony, opened the door of, and walked into a certain little parlour, where former experiences led him to believe he should find Miss Rowley. He was not mistaken. Here, indeed, was Miss Rowley, but not Miss Rowley alone. Two or three other young ladies were there also, and they too, the whole of them, set up, as if with one voice, a murderous scream of terror, on the entrance of the warlike figure of Mr Higgins. That gentleman was in raptures with his reception. The effect of his appearance was all he could have wished.

Out of a compassionate feeling, however, for the terrors of the fair spinsters, Mr Higgins lost no time in avowing himself, and assuring them of his identity. Having thus allayed their fears, Mr Higgins, after taking a cup of tea, which happened to be on the table at the moment, entered into a full and particular account of his Highland expedition, to the great edification of the ladies. To what extent, however, Mr Higgins' hair-breadth escapes by flood and field helped him to recover the favour of Miss Rowley, or to check the advances of the detested Snawley, we never learned.

WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

HUSBAND AND WIFE.

As pleasant an old gentleman as ever lived was Major Lucas—free and funny, open-hearted and hospitable—ever ready to relieve the unfortunate or succour the oppressed. Contentment dwelt within his heart—good-nature smiled upon his cheek. His was a life to be envied. After having taken a prominent part in the Peninsular campaigns—during which he had risen from a simple ensign to a fire-eating major—he left the army, and, with his wife and little daughter, retired to Bloomly Hall, in the county of Northumberland, where, by his pleasing manners, he soon endeared himself to all the neighbourhood. His only fault—if such it can be called—was his love of good eating and drinking; and, when the wine-cup diffused its glowing influence around, who so excellent at telling a good story as Major Lucas?—who so successful in setting the table in a roar?

For a while after settling in Northumberland, none were so happy as Major Lucas and his dame.

"All went merry as a marriage bell."

But "that fell sergeant, Death," with envious hand, plucked the bright roses from the lady's cheek, and, laying his icy finger on her form, "chilled it to a cold and joyless statue." Great was the grief of the Major on this occasion; and it was not till years afterwards that he regained his wonted elasticity of spirit. His daughter, Fanny, was now the only tie that bound him to this world; on her he lavished the utmost of his affection; and she was not ungrateful, for she loved her father with all the love a daughter *can* bestow upon a father.

The mansion of Major Lucas had once belonged to his progenitor—it was the home of his childhood; and this had been his reason for becoming the purchaser of it. Situated a few miles from Alnwick, it overlooked the Vale of Whittingham—as pretty a spot as there is in the whole of Northumberland. Who can look upon this vale, and the scenery around it, from some near upland, in the soft and mellow light of a calm evening of the early autumn, without an intense feeling of gratitude, admiration, and delight? Who that has looked upon it can ever forget it? "Village, dome, and farm," fields of waving corn, and trees not yet fallen into the sere, the yellow leaf, all lying at your feet; while the stern Cheviots, on which the sun-rays linger, crouch in the distance, frowning, as it were, on the contentment and repose of this sweet spot.

On such an evening, two persons were gazing on this scene from an eminence above Broompark. Their air and dress proclaimed them of gentle birth. The taller was a gentleman of about six-and-thirty years of age, whose sun-burnt visage marked him as one who had lived in a tropical clime for years. A tall, manly fellow he was, and a likely one to win a lady's love. His companion was a young lady of four-and-twenty. Dark, lustrous eyes she had; and raven ringlets hung adown a cheek

"Whose red and white
Nature's own sweet and cunning hand laid on."

Her figure was small, yet graceful, and her feet were the tiniest in the world. It was Fanny Lucas. He on whose arm she leant was called Colonel Travers.

They stood in silent admiration, watching the sun's last rays depart; and, as the moon, which always shines on lovers, gave forth her light—the brighter because alone—they turned and proceeded down the steep towards Bloomly Hall. Colonel Travers felt the soft pressure of the arm of the gentle being beside him, and a thrill of pleasure ran through his frame. He stopped, pressed her to his heart, and kissed her.

"Dearest girl!" he cried, "the thought of parting from you"——

"Parting!" ejaculated Fanny, in breathless fear, turning her love-darting eyes upon the countenance of her lover.

"Yes, Fanny, for a week we must separate. Urgent business demands my presence in Edinburgh, at an early hour on the day after to-morrow."

"O, Edward!" cried the maid, "there is a strange foreboding at my heart—a gloomy thought I cannot shake away. Perhaps it is for the last time we gaze together upon this bright scene!"

"Do not give way to such ideas!" said he. "Causeless they are, and should be disregarded. You know, dear Fanny, I have delayed my departure till the very last hour, that I might longer hang upon the accents of thy voice—might longer dwell beneath the witchery of thy smile. Until this hour I never knew what misery there is in parting; for, till I saw you, Fanny, my heart had been my own. When I left England, twenty years ago, I was grieved to leave my mother and my sister; but that grief was nothing like the present. In the youth of some, (reversing the ordinary succession,) hope and ambition are stronger far than love; in after life, the energy of hope gets chilled, ambition blunted, and love obtains the mastery."

"Your mother and your sister!" exclaimed Fanny. "Tell me, dear Edward, are they still alive?"

"Indeed I know not. The letters I wrote to my mother while in India were never answered. On my return to England, I flew to that happy spot I had once called home. My mother and sister had left it years before, and were gone no one could tell me whither. In every new place I visit, I cherish the hope of meeting them—that is one of my chief objects in visiting Edinburgh. But it grows late; we must return, as your father will be uneasy at our absence."

So saying, he and Fanny left the copse which they had entered a few minutes before, and struck off in the direction of Bloomly Hall.

Edward Travers was the son of a gentleman of respectable family, but very small fortune. He had scarcely reached his fifteenth year when his father died; and his mother, himself, and a sister, ten his years junior, were left in rather straitened circumstances. He, therefore, speedily embraced the offer of his mother's brother, who was captain of an East Indiaman, to take a voyage to the East; and, if he liked the sea-faring life, to avail himself of his uncle's influence in that occupation. On the return of her brother, Mrs Travers had the mortification to learn that her son had quitted the ship soon after its arrival at

Bengal, and all inquiries after him had proved fruitless. As Mrs Travers heard nothing of her son during the whole ten years she outlived her husband, she concluded he had fallen a sacrifice to the inclemency of the climate.

The truth, however, was, that Edward, disliking the life of a sailor, and disgusted at the manners and disposition of his uncle, neither of which were remarkably mild or gentle, had accidentally been noticed by a British officer who had acquired rank and fortune in the service of one of the princes of the country. He offered his interest, and urged Edward Travers to accompany him in his return to his command, where he promised to procure him an immediate appointment.

To a youth, like Edward, of enterprising spirit and lively disposition, such an offer was highly grateful; but, as he feared to meet with opposition from his uncle, he chose to embrace it without consulting that relation; and his patron having tendered him pecuniary assistance, he left the ship without a leave-taking, and entered on his new profession.

Nor was he deceived in his expectations of advancing his fortunes and gratifying his ambition in his military career. Before he had reached the age of thirty, he had attained the command of a regiment of Sepoys, and had acquired a sum of money correspondent to his wishes, which promised him sufficient enjoyment of all the pleasures of life, unalloyed by the reflection of having injured a single individual.

During the first years of his residence in the East Indies, he wrote many letters to his mother; but, as she had retired with her daughter into Scotland, soon after his departure, they never reached her. On his arrival in his native country, he had in vain endeavoured to discover their place of residence.

Disappointed in his hopes of comforting the advanced age of his mother, and of making a provision for his sister, whose fortune he knew would be extremely slender, he determined to look out for an agreeable matrimonial connection, and in the meantime purchased a house in London, and formed such an establishment as was suited to his fortune and rank in life.

Being called to Edinburgh to give testimony in favour of a man about to be tried for murder—whom Colonel Travers had known in India, and who had returned to Britain in the same vessel—he set off from London in his travelling carriage, a full month before the time he was required, having several letters to gentlemen in the north of England, and in Scotland. His first visit was to Major Lucas, and the whole month had been spent in his house. Fanny Lucas had captivated the Colonel. In her he found all he had ever imagined of the good and beautiful in woman. He lived but in her presence, and she reciprocated his passion. Time had imperceptibly flown by in strolling with her through the "bosky dells" in which Northumberland abounds, and in listening to the music of her voice; and it was not till almost the very day his presence was required in Edinburgh that he could muster fortitude enough to tear himself away. Their troth had been plighted, and, having obtained her father's consent, Fanny Lucas and Colonel Travers were soon to join their fortunes and their fate together. The disparity of years, now that the Colonel was thirty-six and Fanny twenty-four, was not so apparent as it would have been when he was twenty-four, and she but twelve; and, as they grew older, the difference would become less and less perceptible. Surely that man is very near a fool who would marry a woman that is not at least ten years younger than himself. So thought Colonel Travers—and Colonel Travers was in general considered a very sensible personage.

"Why, what's become of you all this time?" cried Major Lucas, from the entrance to the avenue of Bloomly Hall. "One would imagine, Fanny, that on such a night as this there were neither rheumatism nor colds astir, you go out so thinly clad. I really must scold this pet of yours for detaining you so long." Colonel Travers muttered something about the beauty of the evening, to which Major Lucas paid not the slightest attention.

"Who do you think is here, Fanny?" said her father interrupting the Colonel in the middle of a long panegyric on the splendour of the moon.

"I really have not the most remote notion, papa."

"Who but a friend of ten years' standing—Sir Gilbert Harwood come on a visit to us! He has promised to stay for a month."

"Has he, indeed, papa? I am so delighted, though I can't say I ever saw him."

"Come, come, Fanny!" said Colonel Travers, playfully, "don't be so exuberant in the demonstration of your delight. I'll be jealous now!"

"Pooh, you stupid fellow!" said the old gentleman thinking Colonel Travers spoke seriously—"Sir Gilbert is a man of sixty, if he's a day. Besides, he's gouty; and, more than that, he is married. Ay, he was married, a few years ago, to a girl of half his age—only think!"

"Yes!" said the Colonel, "thirty years is rather too great a difference betwixt the age of man and wife. Ten or twelve, now, is just the thing that should be." As he said this, he caught Fanny's eye; and she, by a smile, gave indication that she understood his meaning.

"Pray, papa, how did the lady contrive to marry such an old fellow?"

"Couldn't help it, my dear. Capital match for her—parents dead—dependent upon very distant relations. Poor thing! it was the best she could do. You won't see her to-night," he added; "she is so fatigued with the journey from Edinburgh, that she has gone to bed. You'll see Sir Gilbert, though. He's in the drawing-room, all alive and kicking—the reason of his kicking is because of his gout."

Neither Fanny nor Colonel Travers could laugh at this impotent attempt at a joke; but the perpetrator of it enjoyed it amazingly; and, although it was said at about the distance of the ninety-sixth part of a league from the house, the laughter of the Major did not cease until they reached the top of the stairs leading to the drawing-room flat in Bloomly Hall. Colonel Travers did not wish to enter the drawing-room in the dress in which he had been walking; but the Major remonstrated, and, opening the door, drew him in by force, while Fanny went to take off her things.

On their entrance into the drawing-room, Colonel Travers descried Sir Gilbert Harwood seated in front of the fire, which had been put on for his special accommodation, with his gouty foot, swathed in flannel, resting upon the fender.

"Colonel Travers, Sir Gilbert Harwood—et cetera, et cetera, et cetera"—and the ceremonials of introduction were gone through with due solemnity.

"I am proud!" said Sir Gilbert, coughing, and adding, *par parenthese*—"Curse that cough!—I am proud, sir, to make your acquaintance." Here he gave a roar, which he explained as having been occasioned by the cat jumping upon his gouty toe, at the same time dealing a blow to the unconscious animal with one of his crutches.

At this moment Fanny entered the room, and was introduced in due form—a second edition of the coughing fit seizing Sir Gilbert, as he courteously replied—"I am proud, Miss Lucas, to make your acquaintance."

Some little billing and cooing took place in a corner, between Fanny and her Edward, while Major Lucas strove to amuse his old companion, by talking over events that had happened about the time when they were boys, although, from the circumstance of their having at that period been

unknown to each other, they had not shared in them. There was, consequently, no mutuality of feeling or interest in such conversation.

"Fanny!" at length said her father to her, seeing that Sir Gilbert was getting rather fidgety, "desire them to bring up supper; and while they are doing so, perhaps you will entertain my friend here with some of your favourite songs."

"Confound the old fool!" inwardly exclaimed Sir Gilbert; "the supper's all very well—but as for the squalling, heaven preserve me!" Politeness, however, forbade him to say anything but that he "would be extremely happy if Miss Fanny"——and so forth.

"Ay, Miss Lucas," said the Colonel—he always called her Miss Lucas before strangers—"sing us that thing of your own composing."

"My composing, Colonel Travers!—now, don't be satirical. I never wrote the words—you know who did." So saying, she sat down to her piano, and, striking a few preliminary chords, by way of symphony, warbled forth the following, which was titled—

LOVE.

"Rosy Cupid, idle boy—
Lovers' torment—lovers' joy—
Hence! and with thee fly love's pains;
No sympathy 'twixt us remains."

Cupid, laughing in his sleeve,
Upon the word was prompt to leave;
But, ere the day was well-nigh done,
Thus sighed forth the wretched one!

"Little Cupid! lovely boy,
All thine energies employ;
Spread thy wings in homeward flight,
And change my anguish to delight!

"All doubt, all hope, all fear has fled,
Since thou, dear boy, from me hast sped;
I'm listless, joyless; smiles restore,
And let me, let me—love once more!"

"Very pretty, Miss, very pretty indeed," said Sir Gilbert; at the same time thinking—"It's a mercy she's done—lucky it was so short."

"Now, Fanny, when you're at the piano at any rate, do oblige us with that pretty ballad—'Durandarte and Bellerma!'" Sir Gilbert looked daggers into the fire; but the daggers vanished, and his countenance was restored to its original expression by the Major exclaiming—"Never mind just now. Here's supper!"

Down they sat accordingly to supper, which passed off in the usual manner in which suppers usually do pass off; "very little bits" being in general request, and whole legs of chickens, one after another, being masticated remorselessly by those who preferred this request—a little gabble all about nothing, and a slight rattling of knives and forks all about something.

Supper over, Sir Gilbert was assisted up to his bedroom by his crutches and his valet, both coming in for a due share of his malediction at every false step he took; and Fanny, imprinting a fervent kiss on the cheek of her father and the lips of her lover, and wishing each a kind "Good night!" left them over their unfinished potations.

After a short pause, Colonel Travers said—"I have ordered my carriage to be in readiness to-morrow morning at five, as I wish to depart before Fanny rises, to spare her the pain of parting. I expect to return by this day week at farthest; and our nuptials, in all probability, shall be solemnized the week after."

"Heaven bless you, Edward!" said Major Lucas; "but, with all your arrangements, you never think how bitter will be the parting of the old man with his only daughter, his parting with one who is the dearest on earth to him."

"My dear sir," urged the Colonel, "you must go to town with us. Leave this life, and engage in the bustle of London. With us you shall ever find a home."

"I am truly sensible of your kindness; but I cannot leave this place. I am wedded to it. It was here I drew my first breath, and my last sigh shall here be yielded up. Here, too, the mother of Fanny, the best of women, died." The old man turned away his head to conceal from Colonel Travers the tear that had started to his eye unbidden. He continued—

"This spot is to me fraught with pleasing and with bitter recollections. Here I have been truly happy—here have I been truly wretched."

"Well, well!" said Edward Travers, abruptly rising—for he feared the Major's griefs would, if recounted, prevent the worthy old gentleman from enjoying a comfortable night's rest—"we'll talk of this when I return. In the meantime, good night." He pressed the old man's hand, and retired to his room, which was next to that occupied by Sir Gilbert Harwood and his lady. The partition being of wood, was so thin he could hear the old fellow cursing and coughing by turns. Leaving him, therefore, to his amusements, Colonel Travers fell fast asleep.

Sir Gilbert Harwood, when plain Gibby Hairwud, had gone out to Grenada in the capacity of a cabin-boy; and, on arriving there, had accepted the office of book-keeper—*Anglice*, whipper-in—to the slaves of an extensive proprietor. The tide of time rolled on, and, somehow or other, brought with it wealth to Gibby. In turn, he himself became a proprietor of slaves and plantations. This was the more remarkable, as he was the most disagreeable, ill-tempered, and, perhaps, ill-looking man in the island. His eyes were like well-boiled oysters, and his lips as thick as the intellect of a student of Gilmerton University. On the slightest provocation, he would burst into the most uncontrollable paroxysms of rage; and while the fit was on him, he did not care what he did. Once he flogged a slave till the poor wretch fainted for loss of blood, and shortly afterwards expired. Fearful that he might be called to account for this, he left his estate to the charge of his overseer, and returned to his native land, purchasing a knightship, for the sum of £700, when he reached London.

On his arrival in Edinburgh, his wealth procured him ready admission into the society of the middle class of people, and he was sometimes invited even to the board of the more aristocratic set. Finding himself as comfortably situated as it is almost possible for such a man to be, he bethought him of looking about for a wife; and he was not long in fixing upon a young lady of one-and-twenty, without a penny in her purse. Miss Eleanor Torrington was universally acknowledged to be decidedly beautiful, and she was so, as far as good eyes and a fine complexion could make her. She was not without suitors to the honour of her hand; but as, unfortunately, every one of them was as poor as herself, her relations would never consent to any such match. Of all the beaux in her string, Edgar Clifton was the most favoured. She had known him for years, and she was sure he loved her. He had accepted a situation in a mercantile house in Liverpool shortly before the arrival of Sir Gilbert Harwood in Edinburgh; but, as his salary could hardly keep himself, it was no extraordinary exercise of prudence on his part to decline marrying upon it. Edgar Clifton absent, and her friends solicitous for the match, Eleanor Torrington accepted the offer of Sir Gilbert Harwood in the frenzy of desperation. It was not long ere she found that he was peevish and jealous. She could not venture to look out of the window without subjecting herself to the suspicion of casting a sheep's eye at some fellow in the street; nor could she go out alone, without

having it said that she had some appointment with somebody or other. If Sir Gilbert walked abroad with her, he was sure to detect some brawny, broad-shouldered fellow leering or winking to her. In short, he contrived to make Eleanor's situation none of the most enviable by such gratuitous suspicions.

Sir Gilbert's wealth had enabled him to become one of the directors of a joint-stock insurance company; and in the first week of his marriage, his wife so won upon his good nature as to get him to use his influence in obtaining a situation in the office for him whom Eleanor had loved, and who had loved her "in days gone by"—Edgar Clifton.

Edgar was quite elated when the news of his appointment reached him; and, though the salary offered was not much more than he had where he was, he accepted it, looking upon the situation as the stepping-stone to a better. He blessed Eleanor's kindness in his heart, though he knew he dared not look upon her with other eyes than those of a stranger.

Whether the fact of Eleanor having interested herself for the appointment of Clifton had given fresh cause for Sir Gilbert's jealousy, is not very evident; but on every occasion that presented itself, he strove to insult him. One afternoon, on stepping into the Leith coach, Sir Gilbert was not a little astonished to find that the only other occupant of the vehicle was Clifton. "Methinks you are dainty, young man," he said. "It strikes me that walking would be good exercise for such as you, considering that sixpences can't be over rife with young men in your situation." Had this been said by any other than the husband of Eleanor, Clifton's reply would have been a blow; as it was, he only contented himself with smiling contemptuously, and getting out of the coach as it stopped to take up a passenger.

In process of time, Sir Gilbert's jealousy rose to such an extent, that when he had been six years wedded to Eleanor, he determined on taking her from Edinburgh for a while, to some place where he was sure she knew no one; and this was the reason of his visit to Major Lucas.

In the morning, Colonel Travers was up betimes, his carriage was at the door, and he was about to depart, when suddenly he recollected that he had left a favourite ring upon his dressing-table. He therefore returned to his room, and had secured what he wanted, when his attention was arrested by hearing the voice of Sir Gilbert in the room adjoining, in a tone, for him, unusually elevated. He seemed to be addressing his wife.

"Ay, ay, Lady Harwood, you may deny it if you like; but you'll never convince me that you were not ogling that tall, whiskered fellow, that sat opposite to you in the coach yesterday."

"Nay, on my word," interrupted the lady.

"Lady Harwood! Lady Harwood! I'm not the man to be contradicted!" Here his voice rose to a tremendous pitch.

"But, Sir Gilbert"——

"Don't Sir Gilbert me—you—you woman! Zounds!"——

"Ha! ha! ha! I declare the old man's in a passion!"

"Old man! Lady Harwood, this is not to be borne. You'll sit before your looking-glass there, smiling at me, will you, you abandoned creature! Come away from that infernal looking-glass, or"——

Another "ha! ha! ha!" from Lady Harwood, was all his answer.

Colonel Travers then heard a noise, as if something heavy had been thrown—a crash of glass and a half-suppressed scream. Without ceremony, therefore, he rushed into Sir Gilbert Harwood's room—and the scene that met his gaze was one of a serious cast, dashed with a spice of the ludicrous. A cheval glass lay shivered, evidently from having come into too close contact with one of Sir Gilbert's crutches; on the floor, in a swoon, was Lady Harwood, habited in a morning gown, and having her hair in papers; while Sir Gilbert himself was sitting half up in bed, looking on the devastation he had made with an expression of countenance that, at any other time than the present, would have thrown Colonel Travers into a most uncontroulable fit of laughter. The first act of Colonel Travers, was to fly to the assistance of the lady—to raise her, and sprinkle some cold water on her face.

For a while he gazed on her in mute astonishment; but at length found voice to say—"Eleanor! my Eleanor! Good heavens! this is indeed fortunate." The blood was again mounting to the cheeks of Eleanor; and Colonel Travers thus seeing signs of her speedy recovery, lifted her in his arms, and bore her from the room, leaving Sir Gilbert struck dumb with amazement.

Hurrying Lady Harwood into his carriage, Colonel Travers desired the coachman to drive off; and away spanked the cream-coloured ponies at a brisk pace.

Shortly after their departure, Major Lucas having been awakened by the noise in Sir Gilbert's apartment, hurried on his clothes, and proceeded thither. Sir Gilbert was not long in informing his host of what he was pleased to term the villany of Colonel Travers, and the abduction of Lady Harwood. "Mount, mount, and away!" was the cry; and a postchaise having been obtained from Alnwick in a very short space of time, Sir Gilbert Harwood, Major Lucas, and his weeping daughter, who could not be made to believe in the guilt of Colonel Travers, were soon on the track of the fugitives. At Berwick, where they stopped to change horses, they obtained the information, that the pair had breakfasted there, and had left about three quarters of an hour before. On, on, they went with freshened speed, increased by the tidings they learned of the pursued at every stage, until they arrived at Dunbar, when Sir Gilbert said he was so very ill he could not venture to proceed.

"Tut, tut, man!" said Major Lucas, "you'll be better soon." But, alas! instead of better, Sir Gilbert found himself worse, and expressed a wish to stop at every stage they came to. Major Lucas would not hear of such a thing, and, by dint of coaxing and threatening, he brought Sir Gilbert as far as Musselburgh.

"Here I must stop!" cried Sir Gilbert; "I feel so very ill, that I really must give up the chase."

It was thereupon agreed, that Fanny, who was becoming more and more agitated as she drew near the city which enshrined her beloved, should be left at Musselburgh, to take charge of Sir Gilbert, while the Major proceeded alone to Edinburgh.

In a parlour of one of the principal hotels of the Modern Athens, sat Lady Harwood and Colonel Travers, on the evening of the second day after the events just recorded. They sat, side by side, upon a sofa.

"Nay, nay, dear Eleanor," said the Colonel, "I cannot pardon you. You ought to have written more than once. Surely some of your letters would have found me."

"Now, Edward," replied his fair companion, playfully patting his cheek with the corner of her handkerchief, "you are too severe upon your poor Eleanor! Do not, I pray you, mar the joy of our present meeting with thinking of the sorrows of the past."

A tap at the chamber door was almost immediately followed by the entrance of a waiter, who presented a card to Eleanor, on which was inscribed the name of "Edgar Clifton." She started, and turned deadly pale; she had not seen him for years.

"Desire the gentleman," she said, in as calm a voice as it was in her power to assume—"Shew the gentleman in here." The waiter vanished. "Edward," she continued,

addressing Colonel Travers, "will you do me the favour to retire for a few moments?"

"Certainly, my dearest." And Colonel Travers quitted the apartment.

A few minutes only elapsed after his departure, when the waiter ushered Edgar Clifton into the presence of Lady Harwood.

"This is not well, Mr Clifton," said she, assuming a dignity consonant to the difference of station between her and her visiter. "This is not well, Ed——, I mean Mr Clifton, and I another's wife." She felt she was either saying too much or too little. She thought the latter, and inquired—"To what am I to attribute this unexpected visit? Pray be seated." And she motioned him to a chair.

"Lady Harwood, I come not to trifle either with your time or my own. This afternoon, I was waited upon by one who informed me of your flight, in the company of an officer, from the protection of your husband. I do not come to upbraid you, Lady Harwood; but, oh, may your feelings never be so wretched as mine have been since I heard this!"

"Mr Clifton!" cried Lady Harwood, rising, "this—this is too much!"

"Hear me out, and then farewell for ever! My confidence in the faith of womankind has, by your conduct, undergone a thorough revolution. Henceforth, I shall believe there is no virtue in them. Lady Harwood, I have accepted a situation in a foreign land. To-morrow I leave Scotland never to return. I could not, however, leave it without first waiting upon you, to bid you an eternal adieu! Madam, farewell—farewell for ever!"

He mechanically held out his hand, which Lady Harwood as mechanically took, and, franticly pressing his lips to her forehead, rushed from the apartment ere she could utter one syllable in reply. Hardly was he gone, when footsteps were heard without, and Colonel Travers entered the apartment, followed by Major Lucas.

"Villain!" exclaimed Major Lucas, "you do not so soon escape me!"

"Villain!" reiterated Colonel Travers; "but no—you are the father of Fanny Lucas!"

"Name her not!" said the enraged father. "Was it not a villain's part, first to awaken love in the bosom of a virtuous girl, and then abandon her? Was it not the part of a villain to seduce the affections of a wife? Was it not"——

"Be calm, Major Lucas—be calm. Sit here, sir, and I will tell you all!"

"No, sir, I shall not sit in your presence! I have, after considerable trouble, traced you hither; and, believe me, I shall not lose sight of you until you give me the only satisfaction an injured father can demand of you."

"My dear Major!" cried the Colonel, "be not in a passion. I perceive your error. This lady," continued he, directing the attention of Major Lucas to Lady Harwood, whom he had not hitherto observed; "this lady, sir, is—my sister, by the mother's side! Allow me to introduce you."

"What!" exclaimed Major Lucas, more calmly than heretofore. "Your sister!"

"Even so. On my entrance into Sir Gilbert's room, and from some of his sentences which I had previously overheard, I knew that the old fellow was jealous; and the moment I recognised my long-lost sister in the person of his wife, I determined to annoy him for it. This was the cause of my carrying her off so unceremoniously. To quiet your fears and those of my dear Fanny, the instant I reached Berwick I wrote you, revealing my plot, and requesting you to keep up the joke."

"But my absurd haste has spoiled all. Can you forgive me, Colonel, for my unjust suspicions?"

"That I do most sincerely. But, now, since you are in Edinburgh, I insist upon your staying with Eleanor and me, till we are ready to return."

"My dear sir," said Major Lucas, embracing him and Lady Harwood by turns, "you know I should be most happy to stay; but—but—the truth must out." And he fixed his eyes upon Lady Harwood.

"Good heavens!" she cried, "what is the matter?—has anything happened to my jealous old man?"

"You have guessed pretty near the truth, my dear. Your husband is lying ill, very ill, at Musselburgh."

Lady Harwood did not faint at this intelligence; but, like a prudent woman, went and got on her bonnet and shawl, and insisted upon accompanying Major Lucas, that instant, to the couch of her husband. Colonel Travers, who had meanwhile been informed that Fanny Lucas was the old man's nurse, also insisted upon going; and accordingly the carriage was ordered, and in an hour thereafter they were set down at the door of the inn that contained Sir Gilbert Harwood and Fanny Lucas.

Fanny, apprised of their presence, soon made her appearance. She looked pale and fatigued. All was explained to her, and she was speedily locked in the arms of Colonel Travers. To the inquiries of Major Lucas and Lady Harwood regarding the well-being of Sir Gilbert, Fanny answered by vague and indefinite sentences. Their suspicions were roused, and, requesting the landlord to shew them to Sir Gilbert's room, their utmost fears were realized. Sir Gilbert Harwood was a corpse! He had died on the afternoon of the preceding day, and died in the belief of Lady Harwood's inconstancy. Time, however, had not been given him to alter his will, and she stood the heiress of his wealth. A widow's grief is of a greatly subdued nature in cases of this kind.

They returned to Edinburgh with the mortal remains of Sir Gilbert, and in due time had them consigned to the earth.

Being now in a state to better the circumstances of Edgar Clifton, whom she yet loved, she made every inquiry regarding him; but all the information she could obtain, was, that he had really gone abroad. Years on years passed by, and, notwithstanding his resolution, Edgar Clifton returned to his native land—and as poor as when he went. Lady Harwood, though by this time pretty well down the vale of years, and after having refused several offers, consented to become plain Mrs Clifton.

"Alas! the love of woman! it is known
To be a lovely and a fearful thing;
For all of theirs upon that die is thrown,
And if 'tis lost, life hath no more to bring
But mockeries of the past alone."

By the time at which this extraordinary event took place, Major Lucas had been dead for five years, and Colonel Travers and his lady were the happy parents of seven little blooming responsibilities.

JULIA FORRESTER.

"A creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food;
Made up of charms and simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles."

WORDSWORTH.

"HERE, then, our conference ends!" said Mr Barton, rising; "I love your daughter, Constance—fondly, passionately love her; but you are well aware my slender means are inadequate to support her as my wife."

"And, however happy I might be," said Mr Forrester, also rising, "to settle a very good girl with a man of character, whom she seems to approve, I cannot consent to injure the interests of my youngest daughter, by bestowing such a sum as you propose upon her sister."

"Farewell, then!" cried Barton, pressing the old man's

hand—"Heaven bless you and her! Farewell, for ever!" So saying, the suitor took his hat, and passed from the apartment.

For some time after his departure, Mr Forrester stood with his eyes fixed upon the door which Barton had closed behind him. He could hardly believe but that the scene which had just passed, was all a dream.

"That the noble, the romantic lover!" he exclaimed, "could be thus mercenary, I could not have believed." He passed his hand across his eyes, and hastened to convey tidings of the unpleasant result of this interview to his daughter.

Constance heard all, calmly, meekly. There was no fainting—no tremor shook her frame; but a deadly paleness o'erspread her "carnation-dyed" cheek. She approved her father's resolution, while she felt that Barton's ascendancy over her affections could never be shaken off.

"She pined in thought," and her health became impaired. Her sister, Julia, a bright-eyed laughing girl of sixteen, marked the change upon her, and the discontinuance of the visits of one who had been with them for the last two years almost daily. Soon the truth beamed upon her. That instant she flew to her father, and entreated him not to let a mistaken kindness to her, prove their general unhappiness. She declared, with all the sincerity of a young affectionate mind, that she valued fortune only in so far as it might enable her to promote the comfort of those she loved. The continued illness of Constance, and the fear that it might hurry her into an untimely grave, were urged by Julia. The father heard, and reluctantly approved. Constance, while she could not but admire the noble-mindedness of Julia, would not consent to this sacrifice of her sister's interest. She attempted to rally her spirits, and resume her wonted avocations; but the effort was too great—her heart sickened, and the couch of suffering again received her.

Julia could bear this no longer; and with her father's consent, she recalled Barton. His return soon restored the declining health of his mistress. The day was fixed, and he and Constance Forrester were united.

Charles Sommerville—the young, the gay—"the glass of fashion, and the mould of form"—had won the affections of the pretty Julia Forrester. Shortly after the marriage of her sister, a letter came from him, informing her that his father had obtained a cadetship for him, and that in less than a week he must sail for India. "It is best," he said, "that I should depart without the misery of a meeting." He concluded, by vowing that in his "heart of hearts," she should ever hold the chiefest place; and that, in a few years, he would return to her, and once again they should be happy.

Bitter were the tears that Julia shed—joyless was that heart to which grief had been a stranger. The very scenes which together they had looked on, became hateful to her for the remembrances they brought. She resolved on a change of scene, and accordingly set out on a visit to her sister, who had fixed her abode at a distance of about thirty miles from her father's, on the borders of Northumberland.

For some weeks she remained under the Bartons' roof, and great was her annoyance when she saw that they were far, very far from happy. Barton himself had got into a course of dissipation, and he was borne away by its impulse. He neglected his wife, staying away from her for days, whenever she ventured to reprove or contradict him. Julia remonstrated with him on the folly of such a course; but for her pains, she received nothing but a volley of invectives, intermingled with the wish that she would never more enter his house. Within the hour, she took leave of her sister, who was somewhat astonished at the abruptness of her departure, and returned to her father's.

In due course of time, Constance became a mother; but her infant was so sickly that it lived only a few hours after its birth.

Time wore away, and Constance, feeling keenly the untoward conduct of her husband, pined away, and died. The widower passed the customary period of mourning in the outward show of grief, and many weeks did not thereafter elapse ere he led to the altar a more wealthy bride.

Julia was deeply afflicted by the death of her sister; but, alas! this affliction was not the only one reserved for her. Her father was connected with an extensive mercantile house in Liverpool, which he visited twice a-year, along with another "sleeping partner" of the firm, to examine into the state of its affairs. His whole fortune was embarked in the concern. What then was his horror on being one morning informed by a communication from the head clerk in the establishment, that the acting partner had absconded with all the money in his possession, and that he himself was a ruined man! Fast upon the heels of this announcement, came a demand upon him to pay the outstanding debts of the firm, with which he was unable to comply. Proceedings were summary; and the evening of that day month on which his eldest daughter had died, saw him the tenant of a jail. Not long did his body survive the troubles of his mind. A raging fever attacked him, and confined him to his cell. Julia was ever near his couch, endeavouring to alleviate his sufferings; but all was of no avail—the old man expired, after recommending his daughter to the protection of his sister, Mrs M'Tavish, a widow lady, resident in Edinburgh.

Possessed of a comfortable jointure, and a notable spirit of economy, Mrs M'Tavish was enabled to make a very conspicuous figure in that particular corner of the Modern Athens in which she was domiciled. She rented a house at Newington. She was one of those rigidly righteous women, who, by paying the most punctual visits to a church, imagine they acquire an unquestionable right, not only to descant upon their own exemplary virtues, but to make free with the conduct and character of everybody. Having enjoyed from her youth a very hale constitution, and not having injured it by any tender excesses either of love or sorrow, she was, at the age of fifty-five, completely equal to all the business and bustle of the female world. She was but too happy to receive the ill-starred Julia under her roof, for the sake of the pleasure she would derive from informing every one who visited her, "what a great friend she was to that poor girl."

Mrs M'Tavish had an utter contempt, or rather constitutional antipathy, to literature and music. All her ideas of useful knowledge and rational amusements, were centred in a social game of cards; and Julia, who, from principles of gratitude and good-nature, wished to accommodate herself to the humour of every person from whom she had received an obligation, assiduously endeavoured in this respect to promote the diversion of her aunt; but, having little or no pleasure in cards, she usually came off a loser—a circumstance which produced a very bitter oration from the attentive old lady, who declared that inattention of this kind was inexcusable in a girl, when the money she lost did not come out of her own pocket. At the keenness, or rather brutality, of this reproach, uttered in presence of a large and promiscuous assortment of people, the poor insulted Julia burst into tears, and retired to her room.

In various other little ways did Mrs M'Tavish annoy the sensitive Julia, who at length determined to abandon her protection, and seek her fortune in the world. But, how to employ herself, and where to seek for that employment, she could not determine; for, from her retired habits, Edinburgh and its community were quite unknown to her. Mr Barton, whose second wife was now dead, had written assuring her that when she needed a home his

house was open to receive her; but the recollection of his conduct to her sister and herself deterred her from accepting his offer.

Casting her eyes by chance upon the advertisements of the newspaper next morning at breakfast, Julia noticed one to this effect:—

"Wanted, by a family a short distance from town, a young lady as governess. She must be competent to teach English reading, grammar, geography with the use of the globes, French, music, and other branches of female education. Apply, personally, to Mrs Sarah M'Dougal, 10, Dove's Court, Sallyville Place, West End."

Joyfully did she treasure up in her memory the name and residence of the person to whom application was to be made; and, breakfast over, she sallied forth for the purpose of calling upon the lady, and, if possible, securing her situation.

Sallyville Place was situated not in the most fashionable part of the old town of Edinburgh; and it was only after much inquiry that Julia was enabled to discover Dove's Court; No. 10 was thereafter speedily found, and, up two pair of stairs, was the habitation of Mrs Sarah M'Dougal.

Julia was not a little astonished, on being shewn into a sumptuously furnished apartment, that the interior of the house should present such a contrast to the outside; but her thoughts and conjectures were interrupted by the entrance of the lady of the mansion, as large as life.

Mrs Sarah M'Dougal was a fat fusby woman of seemingly five-and-forty, not at all to be mistaken for a lady. She inquired of Julia, in the broadest of broad Scotch, whether she had ever been in a situation before, what her terms were, and other particulars, to all of which Julia gave suitable replies, at the same time informing her how uncomfortably she was situated in the house of her aunt, and of her wish to leave it. Something like a pleasurable feeling passed over the countenance of Mrs M'Dougal when she mentioned this; and the worthy lady immediately advised her to quit the protection of her aunt without so much as bidding her "good-bye." "For it's no respec she should hae frae you," continued she, "whan she hasna *shewn* much."

"This would be unkind," said Julia.

But the old lady soon overruled her scruples on the subject, by suggesting that, if she once signified her intention to her aunt, her every motion would be watched, and the treatment she would receive would be more heartless and unfeeling than before. Accordingly, it was at length agreed that Julia should depart from her aunt's house that night after the venerable lady retired to bed, and put herself under the protection of Mrs M'Dougal.

"An', in the mornin'," said Mrs M'Dougal, "I'll hae great pleasure in introducin ye to my friend Mrs Spigot, the brewer's leddy at Canaan. It's her that wants the governess. Sae ye'll juist consider yoursel as engaged."

And, as an earnest of the agreement, Mrs M'Dougal, in ushering Julia out, thrust a five-pound note into her hand. That night, as the clock struck twelve, Julia, with her clothes tied in a bundle, jumped from her aunt's dining-room window into the little garden plot that lay before the door; and, passing through the outer gate, bade adieu to the house for ever, and set out for the habitation of her new friend. The moon was up; and with somewhat less of difficulty than she had experienced in the morning, Julia picked her way to Dove's Court, Sallyville place, and gained ready admittance into No. 10.

After a little pattering talk with Mrs M'Dougal, and a hot supper, consisting of stewed kidneys and minced collops, Julia was conducted, by a stout, red-elbowed serving-girl, to her bedroom. Her observation led her to detect the entire absence of a bolt, or any other fastening by which the door of the apartment might be effectually secured in the inside; and, that no one might enter her room without her knowledge—for this circumstance had not divested her altogether of suspicion—she placed a chair against the door, and then, half undressing, threw herself upon the bed, and commended her eyelids to the especial tutelage of Morpheus. Restless, fatigued, and feverish, she found it impossible to sleep. The imprudence of the step which she had taken occurred in vivid colours to her imagination. Thought pressed heavy upon her, and she rose and paced her chamber with a noiseless foot. Her candle, though still burning, was fast consuming away. She trimmed it; and, as a precautionary step towards the prevention of fire, lifted it from the dressing-table, whereon it had been placed, and carefully set it down upon the hob of the cheerless grate—in which, from the accumulated mass of well used curl-papers, and other *debris*, it was quite evident that no blaze had been for many a day. During the process of this action, the eye of Julia rested upon a piece of paper of greater dimensions and better texture than the other occupants of the fire-place, stuck between the bars. Her curiosity was excited. She drew it forth. It seemed to be the scroll of a letter. She read:—

"Mr Craford.—Sir,—I am exceedingly sorry for troubling you this morning. But, realey, as a Gentleman, so as I take you to be, I thought you would have come done on Sauterday. I am very hard up to-day, or I would not have sent. Ware it ever so little, I would take it kind would you give it to the bearer. I am, with much respect,

Fanney Dixon."

This was an odd enough epistle in itself; and to Julia—finding it, as she had done, in such a place—it was doubly so. It puzzled her extremely.

An hour had passed away in this manner, the candle was now quite burned out, and Julia was about to make a second appeal to the better nature of sleep, when, as she suddenly stopped, she distinctly heard footsteps treading softly in the passage leading to her room. They approached the door, and ceased. She could hear a whispering; and presently a light streamed through the crannies of the door. Breathless with fear, the truth at once flashed upon her mind. The situation of the house—its shabby appearance on the outside, and its magnificent appearance in the inside—the strange looks of Mrs M'Dougal—the letter she had just read—all tended to confirm her worst suspicions. A hand was laid upon the handle of the door—Julia shrank into a corner. The door was opened, and the falling of the chair which Julia had placed against it, seemed to delay the further progress of her mysterious visiters for a moment. She could hear the voice of Mrs M'Dougal whisper, "Bide a bit," to her companion. A moment afterwards, and one in the dress of a gentleman entered her apartment. He was evidently in liquor. Mrs M'Dougal followed cautiously after, with a light, which she was carefully shading with the corner of her apron. The light by accident glanced upon the countenance of the stranger, and the horror-stricken Julia was scarcely able to suppress the scream which involuntarily rose to her lips; for in that stranger she beheld him to whom her sister had pledged her earliest love—she beheld Mr Barton! Not a moment was to be lost; Julia rushed forward, blew out the light, passed Mrs M'Dougal, and flew along the passage; and, as she ran, the mingled screams of Mrs M'Dougal and the imprecations of Barton struck upon her ear. In groping in the dark, they had both stumbled against the prostrate chair, and there they lay sprawling on the floor. The outer door was luckily ajar—Julia pulled it forward, and gained the street.

Turning the corner of Sallyville Place as quickly as possible, she ran on, without meeting a single person, until, at length, she found herself in the suburbs of the

town. A light—the only one to be seen, for the moon had retired half an hour before—was burning in a little public-house; and thither Julia was but too glad to betake herself for shelter. The woman to whom the house belonged gave some credence to her tale, and agreed to give her lodgings for the night. Next morning, Julia rose not. A fever—the consequence of the state of over-excitement into which she had been thrown the preceding night—confined her to the pallet-bed whereon she had passed the hours till sunrise; and, for weeks after that morning, she still lay on it—oftentimes delirious. Her landlady was compassionate enough to allow her to retain the shelter of her roof; but little more could she afford to give her. She had searched Julia's person, and discovered the five-pound note which Mrs M'Dougal had thrust into Julia's hand on the day of her so-called engagement—that expended, no other resources remained. Julia felt she was dying. She bethought herself of her desolate situation—not a being to care for her—not a friend to soothe her in her wretchedness! And where was Charles Sommerville—he to whom her young affection had been given—he who should have smoothed her dying pillow? She could not believe that he meant to play her false—but why, then, had he allowed seven years to elapse without writing or sending to her? The thought was madness; and she strove to repress it.

Once Julia had determined on sending to inform her aunt, Mrs M'Tavish, of her present situation, and had, accordingly, given orders to the woman of the house; but, on second thoughts, had countermanded them, as she scorned to owe anything to the pity of a relation. The woman, however, seeing little prospect of remuneration for more than a month's rent of her room, had secretly dispatched a message to Mrs M'Tavish, informing her of the present residence of Julia, and her pitiable condition. Great, therefore, was the astonishment of Julia, when, the following night, on opening her eyes for the first time, and casting them round the miserable apartment, she beheld, seated in the only chair which it could boast of, a young man, of apparently twenty-six or twenty-seven years of age, in a military undress. He advanced; and, taking her hand, said, with an evidently forced calmness of manner—

"Pardon me, lady, that I have thus presumed to thrust myself unbidden into your presence; but business of an urgent nature demanded it. Here is a letter from your aunt, in which, I trust, she meets your fondest wishes."

So saying, he extended his hand with the letter; but Julia did not take it. Half-rising on her couch, she gazed and gazed upon the handsome countenance of the speaker. A hectic flush was on her cheek; a wild, unearthly glare was in her eye—these might tell that for this world she could not long be; but the stranger marked them not. He could not imagine how ill she was.

"That voice!" she cried—"that form! Am I—can I be mistaken? Ah, no!—It is my own, my long-lost Charles!"

The exertion was too much for her, and she fell back fainting. Charles Sommerville—for it was indeed he—with the prompt assistance of the woman of the house, soon effected her recovery from the swoon.

When he thought she was composed enough to listen to his narrative, Sommerville informed her that, having obtained leave of absence from India for the space of seven years, he had returned to England for the purpose of making her his wife. Judge of his horror and disappointment when, in answer to his inquiries regarding Mr Forrester and his daughter, he learned that the former had died in a jail, and the latter was dependent on the bounty of an aunt in Edinburgh. Without farther delay, he hastened thither; and, without much difficulty, discovered the whereabouts of Mrs M'Tavish, who informed him that Julia, having decamped from her house some weeks before, was living at a low public house on the outskirts of the town, adding, that she was about to dispatch a note to "the dear girl." This note Charles Sommerville insisted on carrying, and Mrs M'Tavish had reluctantly acceded to his wish. He had flown to the place to which it was directed; and, on being shewn into the room where Julia lay, he observed that she was asleep. Hearing that she had been ill, he feared to disturb her; and had accordingly thrown himself into the chair, in which he had patiently sat for three hours; at the end of that time Julia had unclosed her eyes. He ended by urging Julia to read, if she felt herself able for the task, the letter from her aunt; for, he argued, if that lady desired her presence at Newington, the sooner she went there the better. He trusted she was now well enough to be moved.

Julia answered him by a mournful shake of her head, and with a trembling hand she undid the seal of the letter, and read:—

"Mrs M'Tavish is exceedingly sorry that, for the reputation of her house, she cannot receive Miss Julia Forrester again under her roof. Miss Julia's conduct will sufficiently explain this. Yet, as Miss Julia Forrester seems repentant, Mrs M'T. will have much pleasure in soliciting the interest of her own personal friends to procure Miss Julia a situation in some friendly asylum.

"Enclosed is a letter which was left at Mrs M'T.'s, a few days ago, addressed to Miss Julia Forrester.

"P.S.—Pray, Miss Forrester, did you walk off with any of my night-caps? I had half-a-dozen before you went, and after that I could only find five."

"Well, well!" said Julia, throwing down the letter, "'tis no matter. She won't be long tormented with me now." Sommerville started at these words, as the truth began to dawn upon him.

"Ay, you may doubt it, Charles, but I must tell you I am dying. Once the thought crossed me that there was a peculiar cruelty in the lot assigned me; but for that thought may Heaven forgive me! My past murmurs are, I trust, forgiven. Charles!"—and her voice faltered—"I have but little business to adjust on earth. May I—may I entreat you to be my executor? My property," added she, with a tender yet ghastly smile, "being all contained in this narrow chamber, will not give you much embarrassment. That letter"—and she pointed to the enclosure in the one received from her aunt—"I have neither strength nor inclination to peruse. It cannot contain much of consequence—nothing of pleasure. Charles, when I am gone, I pray you answer it. My last request is, that you will cause me to be buried by the side of my dear, unhappy father." Charles could not answer, but he looked consent, and, supporting Julia, he pressed his lips to hers, and her last sigh was mingled with his tears.

"Is the leddy dead?" cried the woman of the house, abruptly entering. And she bustled forward to open the window, as she gratuitously informed Sommerville, "to let out the soul."

Among the first acts of Sommerville's executorship, it was his to open the letter that she had requested him to answer. It was from a lawyer, mentioning the sudden death of Mr Barton, and of his having bequeathed the bulk of his fortune to Julia Forrester.



WILSON'S

Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE TRIALS OF MENIE DEMPSTER.

In the contemplation of the affairs of the world, there is perhaps nothing that strikes a philosophical observer with more wonder than what has been quaintly called the mutability of truth. With the exception of some of the best ascertained laws of matter, and the evidences and sanctions of our holy religion, there is scarcely anything around us that can be said to be absolutely determined and ascertained in all its bearings—including the influential causes, in a chain extending its unseen links through many minds; the proximate cause, involved in the dark recesses of the soul of the actor; and the effects, spread forth in endless ramification through society. Men are judged of, condemned, hanged, reviled, ruined, elevated, applauded, and rewarded upon less than a thousandth part of the real moral truth that is evident to the eye of the Almighty; and it too often happens, that what seems to be best ascertained by the united testimony of many soothfast witnesses, is, after all, little better than a lie, or an invention of men's minds, rolled up in the clouds of prejudice, selfishness, or hallucination. This truth, of no truth, is apparent to all thinking men; and yet how melancholy is it to reflect that we are so constructed that we cannot but live and act upon the principle and practice that we see the whole, when we see only an insignificant part, that, if observed in the midst of the general array brought out by divine light, would appear not only a speck, but, by the influence of surrounding evidence, changed in its nature, and reversed in its object and bearing! It was but a partial, though a striking illustration of this fact, that the murder which Sir Walter Raleigh saw committed with his own eyes from the Tower window, came to him so distorted and changed, through the medium of public and judicial report, that he could scarcely recognise in it the lineaments of the vision of his senses; for, if the act he witnessed performed in the streets of London, were falsified by the errors or inventions of man, how little could have been known of the motives that led to its commission! This subject, if carried out, might open up a dreadful array of the effects of man's conceit and blindness, exhibiting innocent individuals paying the penalty of death for the crimes of others; characters without a stain immolated at the shrine of public prejudice; and innocence suffering in ten thousand different ways under the cruel scorn of the bloodthirsty Chiun of a blind yet self-sufficient public. We are led into these observations by the facts of a curious case of false implication that occurred near Edinburgh many years ago, from which, besides the interest it may inspire, we may learn the lesson of that charity which our blessed Saviour laboured so much to make a ruling principle in the men of the world, but with a success that might form a melancholy theme for the fair investigations of philanthropists.

In the village of Old Broughton, situated on the north of the old town of Edinburgh, and now nearly swallowed up by the surrounding masses of architectural grandeur that compose the new town of that proud city, there lived (we love the good old style of beginning a story) the old widow of William Dempster, who long officiated in the capacity of precentor in the ancient kirk of the Tron; where his voice, loud as that of Cycloborus, stirred the sleeping power of vocal worship in the breasts of the good citizens. His voice had long been mute, not as that of Elihu, who trembled to speak to the Lord; but as that of those who lie in the mould till that day when there shall be no hindrance, by the chilling hand of death, to sing the praises of the King of heaven and earth. Yet the voice of thanksgiving was not silent in the house of the widow and fatherless, where old Euphan, as she was styled, and her pretty daughter Menie, lived that life whose enjoyments the proud may despise, but whose end and reward they may envy in vain. It may not be that it was their choice (as whose choice is it?) to be poor; but it was their wisdom to know, as expressed by old Boston, that it may be more pleasant to live in a palace, but it is more easy to die in a cottage. The characters of these individuals, who haply never dreamed of forming heroines in the Border Tales, can be best appreciated by those who lived in the last century; for, in these jaunty days, when the sun of perfectibility is beginning to dawn on the moral horizon of a once sinful world, the contentment that is derived from a trust in heaven, and the pride that is begotten of a virtue that rejoices in itself, are more often pictured by the pen of the fictioneer than found in the place and personages that be. The representations of our old painter, George Jamesone, would be true as applied to Euphan Dempster and her daughter; for the dresses of the women of Scotland underwent small change until the eventful era of the nineteenth century; but we need them not—for our faithful memory has treasured the description of our parent who lived to set forth the old representative of the Covenanters, sitting with her linsey-wolsey gown, of green or cramosie, made close in the sleeves—the body tight, and peaked in the form of the old separate boddice—the huge swelling skirt of many folds, twined out at the pocket-holes, and open in front, to shew the bright-coloured petticoat of callimankey—her round-eared mutch that served the purpose of bonnet and coif—her clear-bleached tuck, with its row of mother-of-pearl buttons running down the front—and her hose of white woollen, that disappeared at the extremities in the shoe, whose high-turned heels gave a kind of dignity to the step of the poor. The dress of the mother in those days was almost that of the daughter, with the exception of the head-gear, which, in the latter, was limited to a band of black velvet, (the *bandeau*,) to restrain the flowing locks; and, high as the word velvet may sound, there were few maidens, however poor, that wanted the small strip of the costly material that now is seen covering the whole persons of the wives of rich tradesmen.

Such were the external characteristics of the inhabitants of the old red-tiled dwelling, so long known by the name of Dominie Dempster's house, in the village of Old Broughton; and, if we will form a character out of a combination of the virtues that dignified and graced the wives and daughters of the old Cameronians, we might make a fair approach to the dispositions and habits of this solitary pair, whose earthly stay and support being gone, trusted implicitly to heaven, for what heaven has seldom denied to the good. The mother was one of those happily-constituted

beings, whose minds are so completely formed, as it were, upon the Bible, that not only were her actions regulated by the precepts of the holy book, but her thoughts were naturally and almost unconsciously expressed in Scripture language; nor could it be said, that, dearly as she loved the old defenders of our faith, who reared their temples among the mountains, and died on the altars, she imitated their speech and manners merely because she loved their virtues—she only drew from the same fountain from which they drew; and the water that slaked their thirst in the wilderness of their persecution, sustained her in the hour of her privation. Obeying the holy behest, "Let thine heart retain my words," she made the religion of Christ "the life of her soul;" and that which was a part of her spirit could not fail to regulate her conversation. An heir of an ever blessed eternity, in which she believed soon to enter, the only worldly feeling that bound her to life was her desire to see her beloved Menie exhibit the fruits of her parental culture as fair to the eye of virtue, as the many simple beauties of her person—her blooming Scotch face, with the blue eye and cheek, that rivalled the peach in softness and colour—her mermaiden hair, and the graces of an almost perfect harmony of proportions—were to the eye of the admirer of female loveliness. And this the mother had already in part seen in the evolution of all those estimable qualities of the heart, that, when joined to physical beauty, form the fairest object among all the fair creatures of this fair but fleeting world.

It is a trite saying, that female beauty seldom brings happiness to the possessor, even when it is combined with that goodness that ought to guard the children of virtue from the evils of life; and this was, to some extent, verified by almost the first of the acts of our younger heroine's intercourse with the world; for she secured the heart of a lover even against her own will, and, with the unsought for boon got unwittingly the envy and deep out concealed hatred of her earliest friend and companion. The son of the farmer of the mains of Inverleith, a property in the neighbourhood, George Wallace, had, for some time, been paying his addresses to Margaret Grierson, the daughter of the occupant of one of the small cottages of Broughton; and his success was in proportion to the attractions of a fine manly figure, and considerable power of that species of conversation which, with love ever on its wings, finds a ready access to the hearts of women. Though his passion had not been declared, it had, by the anticipative selfishness of the sex, been assumed and claimed by the object of his attentions; and Menie had been so far made a confidant of her companion, as to be entrusted with the secret of a love which had as yet been declared only on one side. The communication was sufficient to prevent the simple friend, even if there had been in her disposition any spirit of rivalship—a feeling which found no place in her breast—from presenting even an opportunity for Wallace discovering in her qualities with which her companion could not have competed; and she uniformly maintained, in the presence of the lovers, a quiet reserve, which afforded pleasure to the one, but, perhaps, only tended to quicken in the other a comparison that operated in a manner contrary to the wishes of the confidant. Time, and the frequent meetings and wanderings by the banks of the Leith—then comparatively a sweet and rural stream, especially about the low grounds of Warriston and Inverleith—soon elicited the merits of the two companions; and Wallace was not slow to perceive that, fair and interesting as his first object had appeared to him, she was eclipsed in all the finest attributes of woman by her who had never taken the trouble to display her estimable properties. The reserve of the one—the result of a natural modesty, and of a strict training according to the rules of the wisest of men—set off the freedom of the other as little better than forwardness; while her excellent sense, and an inborn susceptibility of the finest and purest feelings of the sex, whether stirred by the flowers of the field arrayed in their simple beauties, or the heaven-born genius of virtue working its pleasant ways in the hearts of man, brought out, by a contrast dangerous to her friend, the defects of a character that Wallace, in his first blindness, had taken for perfections. The result might have been anticipated by all but the unwitting possessor herself of virtues of which she was unconscious; and it was with no affected surprise that, one night, when walking by the moonlight along the brattling Leith, she heard poured into her ear a strain of impassioned sentiments that ought to have been reserved for another who had a prior and a better right to them.

The startled girl flew home to her mother, and narrated, as nearly as she could recollect, the high-flown expressions of Wallace's changed love; not forgetting to add, that the young man had declared upon his honour that he had never declared any affection for her companion. Overpowered with sorrow for her friend, the tear glistened in her eye as she sat and told her simple tale to her mother, who lifted up her face from the open book, to observe in the delicate workings of a well-trained heart the fruits of her maternal care.

"Your sorrow for Margaret Grierson, child," she said, "is a scented offering to auld friendships; but, 'when thou wilt do good, know to whom thou doest it, so shalt thou be thanked for thy benefits.' I like not the bearing and manners o' yer companion, for I hae seen in her the office o' whisperer, and the fascinations o' the singer wha would kindle love by her smiles, and unholy discord by her wiles. Her vanity, like the gaudy streamers o' her head-gear, winnows wi' every wind but that which comes frae the airth, whar God's chastening tribulations hae their holy birth. Ye may be surprised to hear me speak thus o' ane wha has sae lang enjoyed the first place in your young affections; but my auld een hae a quick turn in them when vanity rideth abroad. She has other lovers than George Wallace, and other places and other trysting trees than the banks o' Leith, or the auld willow that grows by the horse's pule, at the foot o' the bonny brae o' Warriston. Sorrows she for George Wallace, think ye, when she sits amang the ruins o' the hospital o' Greenside, and hears the love tale o' vanities frae the lips o' secret lovers?"

"A' that's new to me, mother," answered the daughter. "I never dreamt that Peggy had ony ither than George. Wha are they, and how came ye by the knowledge?"

"Never mind, Menie," said the mother, "how I cam by the knowledge. Though my eyes, like Jeremiah's, are auld, and do fail with tears, I hae neither the blindness o' the mole nor the deafness o' the adder. But let thae things alone; we hae nae right to pry into the secrets o' our neighbours' ways, albeit they may savour o' the vanities o' Baal. It is enough for me that I warn ye against the 'lamps o' fire' that scorch as well as light. George Wallace is a rich and an honest man's son; and if, as I believe, he has plighted nae troth with the follower o' vanities and double-loves, ye're no bound to reject his affections. Can your heart receive him, Menie?"

"Ou ay," replied the maiden, as she held down her head, and seemed afraid of the strange sounds of her own words. "I hae seen nae man yet like George Wallace, and I hae chided my puir heart for sometimes envying Peggy o' his affections. But are we not told to change not a friend for the gold of Ophir?"

"Surely, child," responded the mother—"a true friend of God's election is better than fine gold; but she who seeketh vanity understands not the name o' friendship, and her kisses are as those of the serpent. Seek nae mair the society o' Margaret Grierson; leave her to her secret thoughts and

secret lovers, and turn your heart to him wha has routh o' means to support ye, and whose love is the love o' the heart that kens nae guile."

The counsel of her parent was ever a law to the daughter; but there was something in the advice she now gave, that exercised an influence over Menie's heart, or rather, there was something in the heart itself, of a nature hitherto unknown to its possessor, that acknowledged and recognised the influence as more congenial to her feelings than any authority of spoken wisdom (though founded on the words of the son of Sirach) she had yet submitted to. The secret of this feeling lay in the well-springs of an affection that had been pent up by her sense of honour; but now, when she found that she was justified in giving her heart its natural freedom to love the choice of her judgment, she lent in aid of its operations the creations of a young and glowing fancy, which soon pictured so many exquisite forms of beauty, both of mind and person, in the object of her rising affection, that, before another morning had dawned on her, she had become versant in the secret and sweet mystery of sighs and throbbings, hopes, fears, and aspirations of experienced lovers. She now wished as ardently for another meeting with Wallace, as she had done for a separation on the occasion of their last interview. Nor did she wish in vain; for he, with a passion roused into a warmer flame by her resisting coyness and startled apprehension, sought her anxiously, to renew his suit, and remove all the scruples of conscience that lay in the way of a passion to be, as he hoped, returned. He little knew that part of the work had been already done to his hand by a mother's cherished counsel; and his joy may be more easily conceived than expressed, even by the electric words of love's inspired power, when he found that Menie not only loved him, but conceived she had a good title to repay him with a warmth of affection equal to that of his own. He was now a frequent visiter at her mother's house; and though he knew that all his motions were watched by her whom he had thus abruptly, though, perhaps, not without just cause, forsaken, he kept steady in his new attachment, and avowed openly a love of which the best man of his station in Scotland might have been proud.

The affection that is hallowed by the blessing of such a parent as Menie's, possessed a good title to be excepted from the ordinary proverbial fate of the loves of the humble; but, unfortunately, the adverse circumstances, that, like harpies, follow the victims of the tender passion, acknowledged no limit to the sources from which they spring. The rejected maiden pursued her successful rival with all the bitterness of disappointment and envy; odious calumnies were fabricated, given to the tongue of inveterate scandal, and found their way to the sensitive ear of her whom they were intended to ruin. Unacquainted with the ways of a bad world, every individual in which she judged by the test of her own pure feeling—the universal error of young and unchilled hearts—her pain was equalled by her surprise, and she sought consolation on the breast of her lover, as they reclined upon the sloping and wood-covered banks of Inverleith.

"I have bought ye dearly," said she, as she looked up in his face through her tears, "when, for your love, I paid the peace o' mind that was never troubled with the breath o' a dishonourable suspicion. The hail o' Broughton rings with the report that I betrayed my friend to secure your affections, and that I am unworthy o' them, as being a follower o' unlawful loves. My eyes have never been dry, since my heart was struck with the false charge. I have looked to heaven, and found nae relief. My mother has tried to comfort me, by telling me o' the waes o' Ane higher than mortal man, wha was pursued to the death by envy and malice, and wha yet triumphed. You, George, hae alane the power to comfort me—tell me that ye heed them not, and I will yet try to hold up my head amang the honest daughters o' men."

"If he heed them as little's I heed them, Menie," replied he, "there will be sma' skaith though meikle scorn. Dry up your tears, love, and tell me if it is true" (and he laughed in playful mockery of her fears) "that you keep the weekly tryst, by the elm in Leith loan, with the notorious Mike M'Intyre, the city guardsman."

"George, George! O man! how can ye mak light o' the sorrows o' yer ain Menie!" said the girl, as she heard the calumny come from the lips of her lover. "That is Margaret Grierson's charge against me; and, if ye knew that every word o' the falsehood goes to my heart like the tongue o' the deaf adder—ay, even though they come on the wings o' yer playfu' laugh—ye wad rather gie me the tears o' your pity than the consolation o' your mirth."

"And what better way, Menie, could I tak to prove my faith in my love's honesty," said he, as he clasped her in his arms, "than by dispersing the poisoned lie by the breath o' a hearty laugh. Nae mair ot, nae mair o't, Menie—I believe it not; and that ye may hae some faith in my statement, "I'll put a question to ye—will ye answer me fairly, wi' the troth and sincerity that your mother draws frae the fountain o' a' guidness—her auld Bible—and pours into yer heart in the dreary hour o' late, even as ye retire into the keeping o' Him who looks down on sleeping innocence with the eye of love?"

"Ay, will I, George," answered the maiden, "with the openness and sincerity with which I lay my sins on the footstool o' heaven's mercy."

"Will ye consent to be George Wallace's wife on Fastern's E'en, and leave the city guardsman to your rival?"

"I am already yours, George," answered she, as she buried her head in his bosom, to conceal her blushes; "I'm already yours by a plighted faith that never will be broken; and it may be even as you say; but I wish nae ill to my enemies, and will spae nae waur fortune to Margaret Grierson, wha has injured me, than that she may get as guid a husband as you will, I trust, be to me."

"Kind, guid creature!" responded Wallace. "If the first part o' yer answer maks ye mine for life, the other proves that ye are worthy o' me; for she wha wishes nae ill to her enemies, will never do wrang by her friends. Gae and report to your mother what I hae said. The time is yet distant; but hope gies light wings to the hours o' lovers."

The two parted; and Menie, seeking the nearest way to her home, hurried along, her heart beating high with unutterable emotions, and with all the pain she had felt from the evil reports of her rival, drowned in the intoxicating pleasure of being the betrothed of the man she loved. The moon, which had been throwing her silver light o'er the dark foliage that overhung the Leith, and catching a look of her own face in the waters through the opening branches, was now half concealed behind a cloud; and, as the maiden passed along by the side of the stream, she required to restrain the flutter of her spirits to enable her to thread her way by the narrow foot-path. The ecstatic emotions of her novel situation, and the hurry of her progress, made her breathless; and she had paused to recover herself, when she observed two individuals sitting by the side of the water. A loud laugh struck her ear; and she did not require to speculate as to the individuals from whom it came—for a voice she too well knew, followed, with words of reproach that shook her to the heart. It was that of her former companion; and a glance satisfied her, that she was in the society of that very individual, M'Intyre the city guardsman, with whose name her own had been so cruelly and invidiously connected. In a instant, the notorious individual was by her side.

"I've waited for ye, Menie," he began, "till the mune has

waned and sunk behind the Pentlands. How hae ye been so lang, woman, when ye ken sae weel the impatience o' a true lover, and that I maun be on the city watch on the morrow, and canna meet ye? Mak amends, and let us roam a wee amang the birken woods, whar the absence o' the mune will be nae hindrance to our loves."

And, before she could reply, he had his arms round her neck, and was pulling her away among the trees. The apparition of the very individual of whom she had been conversing with Wallace, and whose name was a terror to her, with the fearful consciousness of the pollution of his embrace, took away from her all power of resistance; her knees trembled; she tried to reply to him, but could not; and a weak scream, that almost died in her throat was the only show of ineffectual resistance she could oppose to his efforts. A few minutes enabled her to rally her powers; and she had turned to wrest herself from his arms, when she saw Wallace standing at a little distance among the trees. He had that very instant come up; and there was something in the cool, piercing look he threw at her, that repressed the inchoate scream for relief that she struggled to utter; and the hands she held out to him imploring his succour, fell nerveless within the grasp of the man who held her. Upon the point of fainting, she would have sunk to the ground, had she not been upheld by the force of her tormentor; and, in turning her eyes again in the direction of Wallace, she observed he had vanished. The scream, no longer restrained, burst forth; but it came too late, for, if Wallace heard it in his retreat, he might justly attribute it to his own appearance at a time when he might suppose himself an unwelcome intruder. At that moment, two men came in sight; and the city guardsman, probably afraid of being recognised, released her from his grasp, and retreated to the position he had left by the side of her who sat awaiting in laughter for his arrival.

The instant she was liberated, the frightened maiden flew with the speed of terror homewards—all her energies wound up in the mere effort to increase her irregular progress, and without the capability of feeling the true and fearful circumstances of her position. Arrived at her mother's house, she sprang forward in a state bordering on despair, and threw herself on a chair by the side of the fire, opposite to her parent, who was engaged in her usual evening exercise of searching the inspired volume for the balm of the consolation of age and poverty.

"What is this, Menie?" cried the mother, as she saw her daughter trembling under the influence of nervous terror. "Has yer enemy been at her auld wark again? and have a' yer mother's injunctions failed to get ye to rest on the sure foundation o' conscious innocence? It canna be that George Wallace has listened to the poisoned breath o' scandal and envy. Speak, child; and frae this book shall ye get the support that no son or daughter of Adam can lend to the children of sorrow."

"Let me think, mother, let me collect myself!" responded the girl, as she raised her hand to her head, and threw back her locks. "Whar am I? what spell is on me? Am I to be a bride on Fastern's E'en, or a disowned and heart-broken maiden? Why did he no speak to me, or why did I no speak to him? I will to him yet, and explain a'; and the men will speak for me; but wha were they? Ah! they were strangers; and there's nane to warrant the words o' truth."

And, rising, she made again towards the door, apparently with the confused intention of hurrying to Inverleith Mains; but her mother rose and restrained her, and she again sat down to collect her thoughts. It was some time before she could give so connected an account of the strange circumstances that had occurred within the space of a short hour, as to be understood by the mother; but, by questioning and cross-ouestioning, the latter came to the truth—and a truth of dangerous import she soon observed it to be. She had already, in her own person, suffered from the blighting effects of prejudice, and she trembled as she surveyed the difficulties that lay in the way of a proper explanation. The poison of a false conviction had too certainly already entered the breast of Wallace, and she knew that its workings might be made only the more inveterate the greater the efforts resorted to for eradicating it. In all her trials, however, her refuge was the book that supported her fathers in the mountain glens, when the storm of persecution raged over a struggling land; and, enjoining her daughter to offer up with her their prayers to the throne of grace, she sought from the true fountain the means of relieving them from the danger which threatened innocence and poverty. The night passed, and the morning came, when it was resolved that they both together should repair to the residence of Wallace, and openly declare to him the truth of the perplexed appearances which had too evidently operated on his mind to their disadvantage; but a little farther consideration shewed them the inexpediency of thus assuming that the conduct of Menie required explanation; and the resolution that at last prevailed, was to wait for some time to ascertain what might be the intentions and motions of Wallace, whom they expected to call at the house, according to his wont, as he passed to the city. The day passed away, but there was no appearance of Wallace; and, on the day following, it was ascertained, from one of his father's servants, who was passing with grain to the market, that he had gone to the borders of England to bury a relation, where, it was expected, he would remain for a considerable time, to arrange the affairs of the deceased, to whom his father was nearest heir-at-law This intelligence made it only more certain that the prejudice had taken root; because, otherwise, both duty and inclination would have forced him to pay a visit to his betrothed before his departure, however sudden or unexpected that might have been.

A month passed, and Wallace had not yet returned; but Fastern's Even was still a month distant, and every day brought the hope of a letter, at least, to explain the cause of his conduct, and point out his future proceedings, whether "for feid or favour." But no letter came; and all their inquiries ended in the intelligence that his relative's affairs were not yet wound up, and that some weeks yet would elapse before he could return. The situation, meanwhile, of the victim of prejudice was painful, and gradually becoming hopeless. Her prior sufferings from the stings of calumny were alleviated by the expectation that the generous mind of Wallace would scorn the schemes of her enemy, and her marriage would refute the aspersions, and place her beyond the reach of their poison; but now her relief was not only apparently cut off, but changed, by some adverse fate, into a proof—a confirmation of what had been alleged against her character. Every day found her a mourner; and it was only after nightfall that she could summon up resolution to go abroad on the small messages that domestic wants rendered necessary. Involved in mystery as were both mother and daughter, and pained as the latter was beyond endurance, there yet hung over them a still darker cloud of misfortune, equally mysteriously and fortuitously collected and formed, and equally cruel in its unmerited discharge on the heads of innocent victims. Misery of the deepest and most complicated kind seems often to be evolved from the most trifling causes, as if to shew the proud sons of men, by a lesson that pains while it mocks them, the utter darkness of that blindness which they mistake for the light of a concealed reason. One evening, Menie had occasion to proceed to the small village of Canonmills, on a message to a friend; and, as usual, she waited till nightfall, to avoid the gaze of the neighbours, whom her fevered fancy exhibited to

her (to a great extent untruly) as participators in the circulation of the calumnies under which she suffered. Wrapped up in a cloak, she hurried out, and proceeded down the narrow loan that then led to the village she intended to visit. Her step was stealthy, and her eye filled with secret shame, even among the shades of night. She reached the house, where she stayed for a short time, and then set out on her return, which she was inclined to accomplish as quickly and stealthily as she had done her progress forth; but she had not proceeded many paces from the village when she observed a small wicker corban or basket lying by the side of a hedge-row that then ran along the lower part of the loan. There appeared to be no one near it; and, impelled by a natural curiosity, she proceeded forward and inspected it. There was in it, she observed, a bundle, so carefully pinned up that, though she applied her fingers hastily to it, she could not penetrate its folds. On lifting up the strange deposit, she found that it felt heavy. She stood irresolute, and again looked around her, but saw no one. She was flurried; and her desire to get home urged her to take it up, and proceed hurriedly along the road, with the view of taking it to the house with her to examine it leisurely, and restore it to the owner, in the event of his casting up. She obeyed the natural impulse; and, as she ran home with the unknown charge, she repeatedly cast her eyes about to see if any one appeared to claim it; but she still saw no one; and, in the space of a few minutes, she reached the door of the house, and hurried in. She placed the burden upon the floor—telling her mother, at the same time, that she had found it on the road, and brought it home to see what it contained, as the bundle was so carefully tied up that she could not unfold it on the highway. Her mother put on her spectacles; and, bending down, proceeded, with the aid of Menie, to undo the cloth, when, to their surprise, they evolved from the many foldings of an envelope the dead body (still warm) of a new-born babe. Menie fainted at the grim spectacle; and the mother ran for hartshorn to recover her daughter. In a little time she revived, but it was only to shudder again at the strange sight; while the sagacious mind of Euphan was busy with the divinations of a sad experience, that pointed to some new calamity to result from this new turn of their adverse fate. She saw, at once, that if she called in her envious neighbours, that had been already busy with the character of her daughter, the unlikely story of the finding and bringing home of a dead child would be scorned and laughed at, while the circumstance of the child being found in the house would be laid hold of as a handle for corroborating and confirming the already circulated calumnies, if, indeed, it might not form a subject for judicial examination and exposure, that might end in the ruin of one already too much persecuted. These cogitations led to a sudden resolution. Rolling up the body hastily in the envelope—

"Hie ye quickly, Menie," she said, "to the place whar ye fand this dangerous burden, and lay it in the precise position in which ye first saw it. The shafts o' envy are already thick round innocence, and we need not for sorrow to prick our own eyes that tears may fall. There is a knowledge that is for guid, and ane that is for evil; but 'the work of all flesh is before Him, and nothing can be hid from his eyes,' so shall this shame be made manifest in his own way. Haste, child, and obey the behest o' your mother."

The trembling girl startled back at the mention of again bearing the unholy load; but she was impelled by the strange looks of her parent; and, like an automaton, she hurriedly snatched up the corb, and hastened with it to the place where she found it. She was wrapped up in her cloak, which she threw over the charge, and, after the manner of a thief, or a worker of secret iniquity, she slouched along the loan, trembling and stumbling at every step, till she came to the precise spot, and there she looked several times around her before she ventured to deposit her burden. She thought she perceived some one behind her who passed into an opening in the hedge, and she felt irresolute whether to lay down the corban at that moment, or ascertain first whether there was really any one behind the fence; but her mind again recurring to the contents of her burden, a feeling of horripilation crept over her, and gently crouching down, as if terrified to behold her own act, she withdrew the cloak, left the charge, and fled precipitously along the dark side of the loan. Curiosity impelled her, as she fled, to turn her head, and she saw, with terror, some one issue from the opening in the hedge, and proceed, as she thought, to the identical spot which she had just left. It struck her forcibly, and she shuddered at the thought, that the figure she saw resembled that of Wallace; and the suspicion arose, that he had been watching about the cottage, had followed her, and observed her motions, and would now examine the burden she had so stealthily and mysteriously deposited by the side of the hedge. A strong paroxysm of hysterical emotion seized her, as the full consequences of a realization of the conjecture were arrayed before her by the conjuring power of her terrors. The prior unexplained suspicion under which she yet lay, rose to swell the tumult of her thoughts. She thought her God had deserted her, and that the destiny of her miserable life was placed under the charge of evil spirits, who gloried in her utter ruin. She grew faint, and was scarcely able to walk; and before she again reached the house, the choking effects of the hysterical spasm had almost deprived her of breath. The door was open for her reception; and the moment she entered, she fell upon the floor, panting for air, the blood streaming from her nostrils, and shrill broken screams, like the sounds that issue from the victims of Cynanche, bursting from her labouring throat.

The alarmed mother again applied restoratives to her suffering daughter, who, in a few minutes, opened her eyes, and became sensible.

"Were you seen, Menie?" whispered the mother, anxiously in her ear. "Speak, love. 'Blessed is he that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is.' Fear not, child; tell me, were ye seen by the eyes o' mortal"

"God be merciful to me!" answered the girl. "If my eyes deceived me not, George Wallace came behind me, and saw me lay down that evidence o' another's shame. I am lost for ever!"

The mother was silent, and lifted up her eyes in an attitude of prayer to heaven. The nervous symptoms still clung to the daughter, and shiverings and spasms succeeded each other, till she grew so weak that she was unable to undress herself to retire to bed. The office was performed by the kindly hands of the parent, who, still overcome by the workings of fearful anticipations, sat down by the fire, and, fixing her eyes on the red embers, seemed, for a time, lost in the meditations of a heart that, filled with the spirit of God, felt that, as Esdras sayeth, "life is astonishment and fear," and that we cannot comprehend the things that are promised to the righteous in this world, nor those that are given to the wicked to destroy the happiness of the good.

The night was passed in anxiety and fearful forebodings; and the beam of the morning was dreaded by the daughter, as if it were the blaze of evidence that was to bring to light some crime she had committed. She was unable to rise; the small domestic duties of the morning were performed by the mother, pensively, and under the burden of the prospect of coming ill. About ten o'clock, a slight knock was heard at the door; Euphan cried, in a weak voice, "Come in." She heard a whispering and rustling

of clothes, as if the visiters were deciding, by expostulations and pushings, which of them should enter first. At last, two neighbours, who had been known to be active in circulation of reports against the daughter, made their appearance. On the usual salutation, expressed, as Euphan thought, in a strange voice, and accompanied by stranger looks—

"Is Menie ill the day?" said one of them, as she cast her eye obliquely upon the bed. "Has she nae doctor, puir thing?"

"I haena seen her for mony weeks," said the other. "Why do ye conceal her illness, Euphan, woman? The lassie may dee, when a helping hand might save her."

"Yet, I hae heard that she was seen on the road to Canonmills last night in the darkenin," rejoined the first, with an oblique glance at the other.

The words reached Menie in the bed, and the clothes shook above her.

"God be praised, my bairn is weel!" said Euphan, who understood the import of their speech; "but, though 'affliction cometh not forth from the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground,' yet are we all born unto grief. We hae our ain sorrows, and never pry into those o' our neighbours."

The conversation continued for some time, and the women departed, leaving the inmates to the certainty that the village had got hold of the dreaded topic of calumny against the miserable victim of prejudice. The shock had not expended its strength upon their already racked nerves, when the door was opened by a rude hand, and two men entered, dressed in the garb of officers of the Sheriff Court. An involuntary scream was uttered by Menie as her eyes met the uniform of red facings of the harsh-looking men. Euphan was silent; but her eyes were filled with the eloquence of fear.

"Is your daughter at home, good woman?" said one of the men, while he cast his eye on the bed from which the weak scream issued.

"Ay," answered the mother. "What is your pleasure wi' her or wi' me?"

"Where is she?" added the same person.

"There," answered the mother. "She is weakly this morning, and hasna yet risen."

"No doubt—no doubt," said the man. "She cannot be weel. I understand she has been confined to the house for six weeks, with the exception of some night wanderings; but she must this day face the light of the sun. We have a warrant of apprehension against her, proceeding on a charge of child murder. She must up and dress, sick or well, and go with us. The body of the child lies in the Sheriff's office; and it is right that the mother should be there also."

The words, which had an ironical virulence in them, unbecoming the station of the man, wrung a wail from the accused maiden, which, muffled by the bedclothes she had wrapped round her head, sounded like the waning voice of the departing spirit; and the mother, overcome by the accumulation of ills crowned by this consummation, flung herself at the feet of the speaker, and grasped his legs with her fleshless arm.

"God hath spoken once; but I have heard it many times that power belongeth unto him, and not to those wha whet their tongues like swords and bend their bows to shoot their arrows at the innocent. My dochter is as guiltless o' this crime as the babe she is accused o' murderin. Let her remain, if ye hae in ye the heart that travaileth with pity, and I will awa to them that sent ye, and satisfy them, as never suspicion was satisfied, that Menie Dempster is nae mair capable o' committing this crime against God and his laws, than is she wha is sanctified by the holiest spirit that ever warmed the breast or filled with tears the een o' the mercifu. Grant me this ae request, and it will be a' that Euphan Dempster may ever ask o' man."

"We cannot," replied the officer; "all we can do is to retire for a moment, till your daughter dress herself; but, we cannot wait long—so, quick—quick."

And the two men retired to the door, where their appearance had already collected a crowd of curious inquirers. The behests of necessity overcome the strongest feelings of mortals, and even impart to weakness a morbid strength. The unhappy maiden rose, and put on her clothes in the midst of the outpourings of her mother's religious inspirations; but her sobs and suppressed wailings bore evidence to a sorrow that would not be comforted, even by the assurances of the mercy that endureth for ever. The men again entered; and Menie, accompanied by her mother, was led away to the hall of the Sheriff's Court, to undergo an examination, which, of itself, might operate as their utter ruin in this world.

They arrived at the court-room about eleven o'clock. An examination of witnesses had already been begun. As they entered the door of the room where they were to be placed, Menie saw passing through the lobby several neighbours; and between two men, in the act of taking him to be examined, she observed George Wallace, whose eyes seemed red and inflamed, and who exhibited a strong reluctance to proceed forward, requiring the efforts of the men to drag him before the examinator. The whole scene seemed nothing but a dream; and the trifling circumstance from which it originated, invested it with a character strange and unnatural. It was nearly four o'clock before Menie was called in to be examined. When led before the judge, she looked wildly around her. A chair was set for her, and she sat down. The usual question as to her name, and other matters, were put, and the more important part of the examination proceeded. She was asked whether she had at one time been on terms of intimacy with Michael M'Intyre, the city guardsman; whether she had not been in his society, among the trees of Inverleith, on a night mentioned; whether she had not been courted by George Wallace of Inverleith Mains; whether she had not been renounced by him; whether the reason of such renouncement was not her prior intimacy with M'Intyre; whether she had not been confined to the house for a considerable period, and what was the reason of such confinement; whether she had not deposited a basket containing the dead child near the hedge-row in the loan leading to Canonmills; and whether she was not the mother of the child. Every question was answered according to her simple ideas of innocence and truth; but when she came to state that she found the basket on the road, carried it home without looking at it, and then replaced it in the situation in which she found it, and all this without being able properly to account for so unlikely and extraordinary a proceeding, the Sheriff, prejudiced as he was against her, from her previous admission that she had been seen in the society of M'Intyre, a man of dissolute habits—that Wallace had not visited her for many weeks, in consequence, as she supposed, of that circumstance—and that she had not been in the habit of going out for a considerable period—viewed her statement as false, and entertained the strongest suspicions of her being guilty of the crime laid to her charge. She was accordingly committed to prison until further evidence might be procured, to throw more light on the mysterious transaction.

In the meantime, the circumstances of the case being of that inexplicable kind that stirs the curiosity of a prying public, the results of the precognition got abroad, and it was ascertained that a considerable part of the information afforded to the sheriff had been procured from Elspeth Grierson, the mother of Margaret Grierson, and from one of the men who had seen Menie in the arms of the city guards-



TRIALS OF MENIE DEMPSTER.

man. The manner in which Wallace became implicated as an unwilling witness against his betrothed, was also a curious feature in the case. He had not been absent in the south so long as it had been represented, but had concealed his arrival at home with a view to watch the motions of her whom he yet loved, in spite of the suspicions he entertained against her; and having, on that eventful evening, seen Menie hurrying along with a basket in her hand, he had followed her, and seen her deposit the charge in the manner already mentioned. At the very moment when he was in the act of examining it, Elspeth Grierson came up, as if she had been returning from Canonmills, and helped him to undo the cloth in which the dead body of the child was wrapped; and thus was he painfully committed as a witness of what he had seen. The authorities soon after got intelligence of the circumstance; the child was taken to the office, and a great number of witnesses, chiefly pointed out by Elspeth Grierson, (among the rest, George Wallace,) were examined, previous to the interrogation of the supposed culprit herself.

The unhappy situation of the girl, and the apparently conflicting testimony of the witnesses, roused a sympathetic interest in many of her acquaintances, who, having set on foot a system of inquiry, induced or persuaded the fiscal to seek for the truth, rather than for an unilateral array of inculpative testimony. It was impossible, even on the part of the authorities, to deny the force of the facts, that Menie had been often seen by the neighbours during their visits, though she had kept the house in the day-time, in consequence of the shame produced by the reports circulated against her; that she had been on a visit to Canonmills on that evening when the child was exposed; that the rumours against her (with the exception of the facts attending the depositing of the corb) proceeded mainly from one source, which was a poisoned one; and that, in place of denying, as she might have done, all knowledge of the transaction, she had explained everything with a simplicity that was seldom exhibited by the votaries of vice. These things made a suitable impression, and the crown authorities were obliged to stop short in their proceedings, from the circumstance that they could find no proof of gravidity, and only one witness, Wallace himself, whose reluctance to give his testimony was looked upon, when contrasted with his ascertained inimical feelings towards her, as an affected exhibition of leniency to cover concealed hatred, could speak to the fact of the depositation of the child. All seemed enveloped in doubt; and, if there was a glimpse of certainty in regard to any part of the inexplicable case, it was that, that doubt itself would effectuate the ruin of the unfortunate prisoner, who could never claim again the respect that is due to innocence.

For six months she was confined within the narrow cells of a jail, and during every day of that period she was visited by her mother, whose endeavours to support the young and breaking heart of the victim, by the application of the balm that God has sent to the miserable, only tended to calm the spirit as it sunk in the ruins of a decaying constitution. She was at last liberated; but the freedom of the body only made more manifest the effects of the blasting power of prejudice and suspicion; and the intelligence, that was communicated to her some time afterwards, that Wallace had married Margaret Grierson, crowned the misery that enslaved her, and seemed to cut off all hope that she could ever again hold up her head among the daughters of men. Time passed, and realized that inherent condition of his power, which, as his progress continues, brings to the miserable the sad consolation of the woes of their enemies. The marriage of Wallace with Margaret Grierson was an unhappy one. The collision of adverse sentiments produced in the wife an infirmity of temper, which, in its exasperated moods, sought for relief in intoxication; and the domestic feuds at Inverleith Mains became a common topic of conversation among the inhabitants of Broughton. Such are the turns of fate that acknowledges the influence of a power whose ways we cannot comprehend; yet, a still more extraordinary discovery was to be manifested to the child of misfortune. One night Menie and her mother were engaged in their evening exercise, heedless of the concerns of a world from which they were excluded, when the door opened with a loud noise, and George Wallace stood before them. His eyes were wild and bloodshot, a fever was in his blood, and his nerves, excited by some maniac passion, shook till his frame seemed convulsed, and the powers of judgment and will lay prostrate before the fiend that ruled his heart. Menie started up affrightened, and the mother laid her hand on the book.

"I am compelled to be here," he cried, with a choking, unnatural voice, as he held forth his hands to the maiden; "and it is well I have come, for the quiet air of this house o' innocence already quells the fever o' my heart. I have this moment left my wife; and I had a struggle to pass the water-dam, that shone in the mune to invite me to bury myself and my grief in its still breast. But there is a God in heaven; and He it is wha has brought me here, to look ance mair on her I loved and ruined, and now can only save by my ain endless misery and shame. She lies yonder steeped in drink; but the power o' conscience has repelled the subtle poison, and she could speak in burning words her crime and my eternal shame. Margaret Grierson, it was—my wife—the mother o' my child—O God, help my words!—she has confessed, in her drunken madness, and my heart tells me it is the confession o' God's eternal truth, that the babe was hers—that her mother laid it by the hedge row, a breathing victim, to hide her daughter's dishonour—and that it died there by suffocation. Let me speak it out, that this throbbing heart may be stilled. But it cannot—it never can be in this world—no—no—nor in the next."

And, groaning deeply, he threw himself on a chair, and rugged his hair like a maniac in the highest paroxysm of his disease. The unexpected and extraordinary statement rendered the women speechless. They looked at him, and at each other. Mutterings of prayer escaped from the lips of Euphan, and surprise and pity divided the empire of the heart of the daughter, who had never thought to see misery that equalled her own. There was no reason for the feeling of triumph, where the melancholy relief came from the ruins of one whom they had both loved and respected. He had been the only individual that ever influenced the heart of the one, and the other had fondly looked forward to him as the support and solace of her old age. Now he was a ruined, miserable man, and had no power to make amends for the wrong he had unintentionally committed. The calmness of the silence, and the relief that came from the unburdening of a secret that had been wrung from him by the pangs of conscience, brought him to a sense of the position in which he had placed himself. He had put himself and his wife in the power of those he had wronged, and returning reason brought with it the fears of self-preservation.

"What have I done?" he again exclaimed, as he took his hand from his forehead and looked into the face of Menie. "I have condemned myself and the wife of my bosom—my conscience and a burning revenge has wrought this out o' me; but what shall be the consequence thereof? Will ye bring her to justice, the gallows—and me to a still deeper ruin and desolation than that which hangs over this house o' innocent suffering? Say, Menie; speak, guid mother; our doom is in your hands. What says that blessed book, on the merits o' forgiveness and the crime o' revenge?"

Euphan Dempster fixed her eyes on him calmly.

"Sair, sair hae ye wranged me, and that puir child o' misfortune, wha stands there unable to reply to ye, though the

tears o' her grief and her pity speak in strange language the waes o' a broken heart. But sairer, far sairer, hae ye wranged yersel; for, though we 'have seen the travail which God hath given to the sons and daughters o' men,' we have been answered in the dark nights in which we cried and wept, by him who 'maintains the cause o' the afflicted and the right of the poor;' but ye are left to the wrath o' yer ain spirit, that burns in yer heart, and even now lights up your eyes wi' a strange light. Vainly would my daughter and I hae read this book, if we hadna learned to forgive our enemies. You hae naething to fear from us."

"And are thae the sentiments o' her wha was ance the life and light o' this stricken heart?" said Wallace, as he turned mournfully to Menie, who, pale and emaciated from her sorrow, stood before him, the ghost of what she was. O God! can this be my Menie? Is a' that ruin o' health and beauty the doing o' him wha loved her as nae man ever loved woman? Are thae your sentiments, Menie? and am I, and is my miserable wife, safe in the keeping o' your forgiveness?"

"Ay, George," answered the maiden, as she burst into tears at the recollection of her former love, and the sight of her unhappy lover. "I hae been sair dealt wi'; but I forgie ye, and I forgie also your wife. I will dree the scorn o' an ill warld; but till you and she are dead, my lips will never mention the wrangs I hae suffered from my auld friend, and him I could hae dee'd to serve."

"Miserable man that I am!" exclaimed the youth. How much do your generosity and goodness shew me I have lost, and lost for ever? Whither now shall I fly!—to the arms o' a murderer, the wife o' my bosom—or to the wide world, to roam, a houseless man, to whom there is nae city o' refuge on earth?"

Unable longer to bear the poignancy of his feelings, he rushed out of the house.

For several years after the scene we have now described, Wallace was not heard of. None but his father knew whither he had gone. His wife was absolutely discarded from the farm-house; and, her habits getting gradually worse, she became a street vagrant, and renounced herself to the dominion of the evil power that had, from an early period, ruled her, but whose workings she had so artfully, for a time, attempted to conceal. She paid many visits to Inverleith Mains, but was rejected by the old farmer, who attributed to her the ruin of his son. On these occasions, she broke forth in wild execrations; and, on her return, did not fail to assail the widow and her daughter as the instruments of her ruin. The old story of the child was published at the door, in the words of drunken delirium; and often mixed with stray sentences of triumph that, to any one possessed of the secret, would have appeared a sufficient condemnation of herself. Yet, the construction was all the other way; for Menie had never been cleared by evidence, and the virulent expressions of the vagabond were, according to the laws which too often regulate mundane belief, taken as inculpation; and hence the prejudice against the innocent victim was kept up, and the lives of her and her mother embittered to a degree that called for all the aids of their "sacred remeid" to ameliorate sufferings that seemed destined to have no end upon earth. But the ways of heaven are wonderful. A boisterous sea may wreck, but the sufferer may be carried to the shore by a wave which, if less impetuous, might have been his grave. Wallace's wife at last died, from the effects of that dissipation that had opened the evil heart to give forth the confession of her own shame; and, after this relief, the husband's father paid regular visits to Menie and her mother. He never spoke of the secret that had driven his son away, nor of the place to which he had fled; but he shewed sufficiently, by his attentions and kindness, that he knew all. The house of the widow and her daughter was now kept full by supplies from the farm; money, too, was given to them in abundance, and, in so far as regarded worldly means, the two inmates had, at no period of their lives, been so well provided for.

Five years had now elapsed since the disappearance of Wallace. One night, as Menie and her mother were sitting by the fire, the door was opened, and Wallace stood before them. His manner was now very different from what it was on that day when he rushed like a madman from the house. He stood for a moment, looking at the couple who had suffered so much from his wrongs; and the first words he uttered were—

"Menie Dempster, ye have been true to your promise, and ye have been rewarded. That woman is gone to her trial, and yours is ended. Now shall truth triumph."

Menie was unable to utter a word. Her eyes were alternately turned to Wallace and to the fire. The mother laid her hand solemnly on the Bible, and, addressing the inspired volume—

"'Thus are yer secrets brought to light—ay, even out o' darkness. They wha trust in ye shall not fail in the end, though they should stumble seven times, yea, seven times seven."

"If I had trusted mair to that," said Wallace, "than to the whisperings o' my ain heart, I might never have been a miserable husband nor a banished man. But it's no yet owre late. I am resolved. Menie, will ye now consent to be the wife o' him wha wrought, maybe unwittingly, to your ruin?"

Menie was yet silent.

"I will publish your innocence," rejoined he. "There is mair evidence than my word against her wha is dead. It shall be known far and wide, and you will be the innocent and respected wife o' George Wallace."

"I will speak for her," said the mother; "she will consent. It is asked of her by Him wha has brought good out o' evil, and whase mercies, being the reward o' the patience o' trial, are as a command that shall not be disobeyed."

Wallace drew near to Menie, and took her hand. Her face was still turned away, but he felt the trembling pressure that got sooner to the heart than the sounds of the voice.

"It is enough, Menie," he whispered. "Come, the mune is again shining amang the trees o' Warriston."

The couple proceeded to their old haunts. They passed the hedge-row where the child had been deposited. Menie's step was quick as they approached it, her eyes were averted from the spot, and they passed it in silence. We need not record the spoken sentiments of lovers in the situation of this couple. They parted, after it was arranged that their marriage should take place in the following week.

In the interval, the most prudent and effectual means were taken to clear up the mystery of the old story. The written statements of several individuals, who had heard the broken confessions of the woman, were taken. Wallace and his father added theirs, and there was soon a reaction in favour of Menie, much stronger than the original imputation. Every one believed her innocence; and the marriage, which took place a short time after, confirmed all.

WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE FAIR MAID OF CELLARDYKES.

I DID not like the idea of having all the specimens of the fine arts in Europe collected into one "bonne bouche" at the Louvre. It was like collecting, while a boy, a handful of strawberries, and devouring them at one indiscriminating gulp. I do not like floral exhibitions, for the same reason. I had rather a thousand times meet my old and my new friends in my solitary walks or in my country rambles. All museums in this way confound and bewilder me; and, had the Turk not been master of Greece, I should have preferred a view of the Elgin Marbles in the land of their nativity. And it is for a similar reason that my mind still reverts, with a kind of dreamy delight, to the time when I viewed mankind in detail, and in all their individual and natural peculiarities, rather than *en masse*, and in one regimental uniform. Educate up! Educate up! Invent machinery—discover agencies—saddle Nature with the panniers of labour—and, at last, stand alongside of her, clothed, from the peasant to the prince, in the wonders of her manufacture, and merrily whistling, in idle unconcern, to the tune of her unerring dispatch! But what have we gained? One mass of similarities: the housemaid, the housekeeper, the lady, and the princess, speaking the same language, clothed in the same habiliments, and enjoying the same immunities from corporeal labour—the colours of the rainbow whirled and blended into one glare of white! Towards this *ultimatum* we are now fast hastening. Where is the shepherd stocking-weaver, with his wires and his fingers moving invisibly? Where the "wee and the muckle wheel," with the aged dames, in pletted toys, singing "Tarry Woo?" Where the hodden-grey-clad patriarch, sitting in the midst of his family, and mixing familiarly, and in perfect equality, with all the household—servant and child? My heart constantly warms to these recollections; and I feel as if wandering over a landscape variegated by pleasant and contrasting colouring, and overshaded with associations which have long been a part of myself. One exception to the general progression and assimilation still happily remains, to gratify, I must confess, my liking for things as they were. The fisher population of Newhaven, Buckhaven, and Cellardykes—(my observation extends no farther, and I limit my remarks accordingly)—are, in fact, the Scottish Highlanders, the Irish, the Welsh, and the Manks of Fisherdom. Differing each somewhat from the other, they are united by one common bond of character—they are varieties of the same animal—the different species under one genus. I like this. I am always in high spirits when I pass through a fishing village or a fisher street. No accumulation of filth in every hue—of shell, and gill, and fish-tail—can disgust me. I even smell a sweet savour from their empty baskets, as they exhale themselves dry in the sunbeam. And then there is a hue of robust health over all. No mincing of matters. Female arms and legs of the true Tuscan order—cheeks and chins where neither the rose nor the bone has been stinted. Children of the dub and the mire—all agog in demi-nudity, and following nature most vociferously. Snug, comfortable cabins, where garish day makes no unhandsome inquiries, and where rousing fires and plentiful meals abide from June to January. They have a language, too, of their own—the true Mucklebacket dialect; and freely and firmly do they throw from them censure, praise, or ribaldry. The men are here but men; mere human machines—useful, but not ornamental—necessary incumbrances rather than valuable protectors. "Poor creature!" says Meg of the Mucklebacket, "she canna maintain a man." Sir Walter saw through the character I am labouring to describe; and, in one sentence, put life and identity into it. I know he was exceedingly fond of conversing with fisherwomen in particular. But, whilst such are the general features, each locality I have mentioned has its distinctive lineaments. The Newhaven fisherwoman (for the man is unknown) is a bundle of snug comfort. Her body, her dress, her countenance, her basket, her voice, all partake of the same character of *enbonpointness*. Yet there is nothing at all untidy about her. She may esconce her large limbs in more plaiden coverings than the gravedigger in Hamlet had waistcoats; but still she moves without constraint; and, under a burden which would press my lady's waiting-maid to the carpet, she moves free, firm, elastic. Her tongue is not labour-logged, her feet are not creel-retarded; but, altogether unconscious of the presence of hundreds, she holds on her way and her discourse as if she were a caravan in the desert. She is to be found in every street and alley in Auld Reeky, till her work is accomplished. Her voice of call is exceedingly musical, and sounds sweetly in the ear of the infirm and bedrid. All night long, she holds her stand close by the theatre, with her broad knife and her opened oyster. In vain does the young spark endeavour to engage her in licentious talk. He soon discovers that, wherever her feelings or affections tend, they do not point in his favour. Thus, loaded with pence, and primed with gin, she returns by midnight to her home—there to share a supper-pint with her man and her neighbours, and to prepare, by deep repose, for the duties of a new day. Far happier and more useful she, in her day and generation, than that thing of fashion which men call a beau, or a belle—in whose labours no one rejoices, and in whose bosom no sentiment but self finds a place. In Buckhaven, again, the Salique law prevails. There men are men, and women mere appendages. The sea department is here all and all. The women, indeed, crawl a little way, and through a few deserted fields, into the surrounding country; but the man drives the cart, and the cart carries the fish; and the fish are found in all the larger inland towns eastward. Cellardykes is a mixture of the two—a kind of William and Mary government, where, side by side, at the same cart, and not unfrequently in the same boat, are to be found man and woman. lad and lass. Oh, it is a pretty sight to see the Cellardyke fishers leaving the coast for the herring-fishing in the north! I witnessed it some years ago, as I passed to Edinburgh; and, this year, I witnessed it again.

Meeting and conversing with my old friend the minister of the parish of Kilrenny, we laid us down on the sunny slope of the brae facing the east and the Isle of May whilst he gave me the following narrative:—

Thomas Laing and Sarah Black were born and brought up under the same roof—namely, that double-storied tenement which stands, somewhat by itself, overlooking the harbour. They entered by the same outer door, but occupied each a separate story. Thomas Laing was always a stout, hardy, fearless boy, better acquainted with every boat on the station than with his single questions, and far fonder of little Sarah's company than of the schoolmaster's. Sarah was likewise a healthy, stirring child, extremely sensitive, and easily offended, but capable, at the same time, of the deepest feelings of gratitude and attachment. Thomas Laing was, in fact, her champion, her Don Quixote, from the time when he could square his arms and manage his fists; and much mischief and obloquy did he suffer among his companions on account of his chivalrous defence of little Sally. One day whilst the fisher boys and girls were playing on the pier, whilst the tide was at the full, a mischievous boy, wishing to annoy Thomas, pushed little Sall into the harbour, where, but for Thomas's timely and skilful aid, (for he was an excellent swimmer,) she would probably have been drowned. Having placed his favourite in a condition and place of safety, Tom felled the offender, with a terrible fister, to the earth. The blow had taken place on the pit of the stomach, and was mortal. Tom was taken up, imprisoned, and tried for manslaughter; but, on account of his youth—being then only thirteen—he was merely imprisoned for a certain number of months. Poor Sally, on whose account Tom had incurred the punishment of the law, visited him, as did many good-natured fishermen, whilst in prison, where he always expressed extreme contrition for his rashness. After the expiry of his imprisonment, Tom returned to Cellardykes, only to take farewell of his parents and his now more than ever dear Sally. He could not bear, he said, to face the parents of the boy whose death he had occasioned. The parting was momentary. He promised to spend one night at home; but he had no such intention—and, for several years, nobody knew what had become of Thomas Laing. The subject was at first a speculation, then a wonder, next an occasional recollection; and, in a few months, the place which once knew bold Tom Laing, knew him no more. Even his parents, engaged as they were in the active pursuits of fishing, and surrounded as they were by a large and dependent family, soon learned to forget him. One bosom alone retained the image of Tom, more faithfully and indelibly than ever did coin the impression of royalty. Meanwhile, Sarah grew—for she was a year older than Tom—into womanhood, and fairly took her share in all the more laborious parts of a fisher's life. She could row a boat, carry a creel, or drive a cart with the best of them; and, whilst her frame was thus hardened, her limbs acquired a consistency and proportion which bespoke the buxom woman rather than the bonny lass. Her eye, however, was large and brown, and her lips had that variety of expression which lips only can exhibit. Many a jolly fisher wished and attempted to press these lips to his; but was always repulsed. She neither spoke of her Thomas, nor did she grieve for him much in secret; but her heart revolted from a union with any other person whilst Thomas might still be alive. Upon a person differently situated, the passion (for passion assuredly it was) which she entertained for her absent lover, might and would have produced very different effects. Had Sarah been a young boarding-school miss, she would assuredly either have eloped with another, or have died in a madhouse; had she been a sentimental sprig of gentility, consumption must have followed; but Sarah was neither of these. She had a heart to feel, and deeply too; but she knew that labour was her destiny, and that when "want came in at the door, love escapes by the window." So she just laboured, laughed, ate, drank, and slept, very much like other people. Yet, few sailors came to the place whom she did not question about Thomas; and many a time and oft did she retire to the rocks of a Sabbath even, to think of and pray for Thomas Laing. People imagine, from the free and open manner and talk of the fisher-women, that they are all or generally people of doubtful morality. Never was there a greater mistake. To the public in general they are inaccessible; they almost universally intermarry with one another; and there are fewer cases (said my reverend informant) of public or sessional reproof in Cellardykes, than in any other district of my parish. But, from the precarious and somewhat solitary nature of their employment, they are exceedingly superstitious; and I had access to know, that many a sly sixpence passed from Sally's pocket into old Effie the wise woman's, with the view of having the cards cut and cups read for poor Thomas.

Time, however, passed on—with time came, but did not pass misfortune. Sally's father, who had long been addicted, at intervals, to hard drinking, was found one morning dead at the bottom of a cliff, over which, in returning home inebriated, he had tumbled. There were now three sisters, all below twelve, to provide for, and Sally's mother had long been almost bedrid with severe and chronic rheumatism; consequently, the burden of supporting this helpless family devolved upon Sarah, who was now in the bloom and in the strength of her womanhood. Instead of sitting down, however, to lament what could not be helped, Sarah immediately redoubled her diligence. She even learned to row a boat as well as a man, and contrived, by the help of the men her father used to employ, to keep his boat still going. Things prospered with her for a while; but, in a sudden storm, wherein five boats perished with all on board, she lost her whole resources. They are a high-minded people those Cellardyke fishers. The Blacks scorned to come upon the session. The young girls salted herrings, and cried haddocks in small baskets through the village and the adjoining burghs, and Sarah contrived still to keep up a cart for country service. Meanwhile, Sarah became the object of attention through the whole neighbourhood. Though somewhat larger in feature and limb than the Venus de Medicis, she was, notwithstanding, tight, clean, and sunny—her skin white as snow, and her frame a well-proportioned Doric—just such a helpmate as a husband who has to rough it through life might be disposed to select. Captain William M'Guffock, or, as he was commonly called, Big Bill, was the commander of a coasting craft, and a man of considerable substance. True, he was considerably older than Sally, and a widower; but he had no family, and "a bien house to bide in.' You see that manse-looking tenement there, on the brae-head towards the east—that was Captain M'Guffock's residence when his seafaring avocations did not demand his presence elsewhere. Well, Bill came acourting to Sally; but Sally "looked asclent and unco skeich." Someway or other, whenever she thought of matrimony—which she did occasionally—she at the same time thought of Thomas Laing, and, as she expressed it, her heart *scunnered* at the thought. Consequently, Bill made little progress in his courtship; which was likewise liable to be interrupted, for weeks at a time, by his professional voyages. At last a letter arrived from on board a king's vessel, then lying in Leith Roads, apprising Thomas Laing's relatives, that he had died of fever on the West India station. This news affected Sally more than anything which had hitherto happened to her. She shut herself up for two hours in her mother's bedroom, weeping aloud and bitterly, exclaiming from time to time—"Oh! my Thomas!—my own dearest Thomas! I shall never love man again. I am thine in life and in death—in time and in eternity!" In vain did the poor bedrid woman try to comfort her daughter.

Nature had her way; and, in less than three hours, Sarah Black was again in the streets, following, with a confused but a cheerful look, her ordinary occupation. This grief of Sarah's, had it been well nursed, might well have lasted a twelvemonth; but, luckily for Sarah, and for the labouring classes in general, she had not time to nurse her grief to keep it warm. "Give us this day our daily bread," said a poor helpless mother, and three somewhat dependent sisters—and Sarah's exertions were redoubled.

"Oh, what a feelingless woman!" said Mrs Paterson to me, as Sarah passed her door one day in my presence, absolutely singing—"Oh, what a feelingless woman!—and her father dead, and her mother bedrid, and poor Thomas Laing, whom she made such a fuss about, gone too—and there is she, absolutely singing after all!"

Mrs Paterson is now Mrs Robson, having married her second husband just six weeks after the death of the first, whom her improper conduct and unhappy temper contributed first to render miserable here, and at last to convey to the churchyard! Verily, (added the worthy clergyman,) the heart is deceitful above all things. But what, after all, could poor Sarah do, but marry Will M'Guffock, and thus amply provide, not only for herself, but for her mother and sister? Had Thomas (and her heart heaved at the thought) still been alive, she thought, she never would have brought herself to think of it in earnest; but now that Thomas had long ceased to think of her or of anything earthly, why should she not make a man happy who seemed distractedly in love with her, and at the same time honourably provide for her poor and dependent relatives? In the meantime, the sacramental occasion came round, and I had a private meeting previous to the first communion with Sarah Black. To me in secret, she laid open her whole heart as if in the presence of her God; and I found her, though not a well-informed Christian by any means on doctrinal points, yet well disposed and exceedingly humble; in short, I had great pleasure in putting a token into her hand, at which she continued to look for an instant, and then returned it to me. I expressed surprise, at least by my looks. "I fear," said she, "that I am *unworthy*; for, I have not told you that I am thinking of marrying a man whom I cannot love, merely to provide for our family. Is not this a sin?—and can I, with an intention of doing what I know to be wrong, safely communicate?" I assured her that, instead of thinking it a sin, I thought her resolution commendable, particularly as the object of her real affection was beyond its reach; and I mention the circumstance to shew that there is often much honour and even delicacy of feeling, natural as well as religious, under very uncongenial circumstances and appearances. Having satisfied her mind on this subject, I had the pleasure to see her at the communion table, conducting herself with much seeming seriousness of spirit. I could see her shed tears; and formed the very best opinion of her, from her conduct throughout.

In a few days or weeks after this, the proclamation lines were put into my hands, and I had the pleasure of uniting her to Captain M'Guffock in due course. They had, however, only been married a few weeks, when an occurrence of a very awkward character threw her and her husband, who was in fact an ill-tempered, passionate man, into much perplexity. The captain was absent on a coasting voyage as usual; and his wife was superintending the washing of some clothes, whilst the sun was setting. It was a lovely evening in the month of July, and the fishing boats were spread out all over the mouth of the Firth, from the East Neuk to the Isle of May, in the same manner in which you see them at present. Mrs M'Guffock's mind assumed, notwithstanding the glorious scenery around her, a serious cast, for she could not help recalling many such evenings in which she had rejoiced in company and in unison with her beloved Thomas. She felt and knew that it was wrong to indulge such emotions; but she could not help it. At last, altogether overcome, she threw herself forward on the green turf, and prayed audibly—"O my God, give me strength and grace to forget my own truly beloved Thomas! Alas! he knows not the struggles which I have, to exclude him from my sinful meditations. Even suppose he were again to arise from the dead, and appear in all the reality of his youthful being, I must and would fly from him as from my most dangerous foe." She lifted up her eyes in the twilight, and in the next instant felt herself in the arms of a powerful person, who pressed her in silence to his breast. Amazed and bewildered, she neither screamed nor fainted, but, putting his eager kisses aside, calmly inquired who he was who dared thus to insult her. She had no sooner pronounced the inquiry, than she heard the words, "Thomas—your own Thomas!" pronounced in tones which could not be mistaken. This indeed overpowered her; and, with a scream of agony, she sank down dead on the earth. This brought immediate assistance; but, she was found lying by herself, and talking wildly about her Thomas Laing. Everybody who heard her concluded that she had either actually seen her lover's ghost; or, that her mind had given way under the pressure of regret for her marriage, and that she was now actually a lunatic. For twelve hours, she continued to evince the most manifest marks of insanity; but sleep at last soothed and restored her, and she immediately sent for me. I endeavoured to persuade her that it must be all a delusion, and that the imagination often times created such fancies. I gave instances from books which I had read, as well as from a particular friend of m' own who had long been subject to such delusive impressions, and at last she became actually persuaded that there had been no reality in what she had so vividly perceived, and still most distinctly and fearfully recollected. I took occasion then to urge upon her the exceeding sinfulness of allowing any image to come betwixt her and her lawful married husband; and left her restored, if not to her usual serenity, at least to a conviction that she had only been disturbed by a vision.

When her husband returned, I took him aside, and explained my views of the case, and stated my most decided apprehension that some similar impression might return upon her nerves, and that her sisters (her mother being now removed by death) should dwell in the same house with her. To this, however, the captain objected, on the score that, though he was willing to pay a person to take care of them in their own house, he did not deem them proper company, in short, for a *captain's wife*. I disliked the reasoning, and told him so; but he became passionate, and I saw it was useless to contend further. From that day, however, Bill M'Guffock seemed to have become an altered man. Jealousy, or something nearly resembling it, took possession of his heart; and he even ventured to affirm that his wife had a paramour somewhere concealed, with whom, in his long and necessary absences, she associated. He alleged, too, that, in her sleep, she would repeat the name of her favourite, and in terms of present love and fondness. I now saw that I had not known the depth of "a first love," otherwise I should not have advised this unhappy marriage, all advantageous as it was in a worldly point of view. A sailor's life, however, is one of manifest risk, and in less than a twelvemonth Sarah M'Guffock was a young widow, without incumbrance, and with her rights to her just share of the captain's effects. Her sorrow for the death of her husband was, I believe, sincere; but I observed that she took an early opportunity of joining her sisters in her old habitation, immediately beneath that still tenanted by the friends of Laing.

Matters were in this situation when I was surprised one evening, whilst sitting meditating in the manse of Kil-

renny, about dusk, with a visit from a tall and well-dressed stranger. He asked me at once if I could give him a private interview for a few minutes, as he had something of importance to communicate. Having taken him into my study, and shut the door, I reached him a chair, and desired him to proceed.

"I had left the parish," said the stranger, "before you were minister of Kilrenny, in the time of worthy Mr Brown, and therefore you will probably not know even my name. I am Thomas Laing!"

"I did not, indeed," said I, "know you, but I have heard much about you; and I know one who has taken but too deep an interest in your fate. But how comes it," added I, beginning to think that I was conversing either with a vision or an impostor, "how comes it that you are here, seemingly alive and well, whilst we have all been assured of your death, some years ago?"

The stranger started, and immediately exclaimed—"Dead!—dead!—who said I was dead?"

"Why," said I, "there was a letter came, I think, to your own father, mentioning your death, by fever, in the West Indies."

"Do I look like a dead man?" said the stranger; but, immediately becoming absent and embarrassed, he sat for a while silent, and then resumed:—"Some one," said he, "has imposed upon my dear Sarah, and for the basest of purposes. I now see it all. My dear girl has been sadly used."

"This is, indeed, strange," said I; "but let me hear how it is that I have the honour of a visit from you at this time and in this place."

"Oh," replied Thomas Laing, (for it was he in verity,) "I will soon give you the whole story:—

"When I left this, four years ago come the time, I embarked at Greenock, working my way out to New York. As I was an excellent hand at a rope and an oar, I early attracted the captain's notice, who made some inquiries respecting my place of birth and my views in life. I told him that I was literally 'at sea,' having nothing particularly in view—that I had been bred a fisher, and understood sailing and rowing as well as any one on board. The captain seemed to have something in his head; for he nodded to me, saying—'Very well, we will see what can be done for you when we arrive at New York.' When we were off Newfoundland, we were overtaken by a terrible storm, which drove us completely out of our latitude, till, at last, we struck on a sandbank—the sea making, for several hours, a complete breach over the deck. Many were swept away into the devouring flood; whilst some of us—amongst several others, the captain and myself—clung to what remained of the ship's masts till the storm somewhat abated. We then got the boat launched, and made for land, which we could see looming at some distance a-head. We got, however, entangled amongst currents and breakers; and, within sight of a boat which was making towards us from the shore, we fairly upset—and I remember nothing more till I awoke, in dreadful torment, in some fishermen's boat. Beside me lay the captain—the rest had perished. When we arrived at the land, we were placed in one of the fishermen's huts, where we were most kindly entreated—assisting, as we did occasionally, in the daily labours of the cod fishery. I displayed so much alertness and skill in this employment, that the factor on the station made me an advantageous offer, if I would remain with them, and assist in their labours. With this offer, having no other object distinctly in view, I complied But my kind and good-hearted captain, possessing less dexterity in this employment, was early shipped, at his own request, for England. The most of the hands, about two hundred in all, on the station where I remained, were Scotch and Irish, and a merry, jovial set we were. The men had wives and families; and the governor or factor lived in a large slated house, very like your manse, upon a gentle eminence, a little inland. Towards the coast the land is sandy and flat; but in the interior there is much wood, a very rich soil, and excellent fresh water. Where we remained, the water was brackish, and constituted the chief inconvenience of our station. The factor or agent, commonly called by the men the governor, used to visit us almost every day, and remained much on board when ships were loading for Europe. One fine summer's day we were all enjoying the luxury of bathing, when, all on a sudden, the shout was raised—'A shark! a shark!' I had just taken my place in the boat, and was still undressed, when I observed one man disappear, being dragged under the water by the sea monster. The factor, who was swimming about in the neighbourhood, seemed to be paralyzed by terror, for he made for the boat, plashing like a dog, with his hands and arms frequently stretched out of the water. I saw his danger, and immediately plunged in to his rescue, which, with some difficulty, I at last effected.

"Poor Pat Moonie was seen no more; nor did the devouring monster reappear. The factor immediately acknowledged his obligations to me, by carrying me home with him, and introducing me to his lady, and an only daughter—I think I never beheld a more beautiful creature; but I looked upon her as a being of a different order from myself, and I still thought of my own dear Sally and sweet home at Cellardykes. Through the factor's kindness, I got the management of a boat's crew, with considerable emolument which belonged to the situation. I then behoved to dress better—at least while on land—than I used to do; and I was an almost daily visiter at Codfield House, the name of the captain's residence. My affairs prospered—I made, and had no way of spending money. The factor was my banker; and his fair daughter wrote out the acknowledgments for her father to sign. One beautiful Sabbath day, after the factor—who officiated at our small station as clergyman—had read us prayers and a sermon, I took a walk into the interior of the country, where, with a book in her hand, and an accompaniment of Newfoundland dogs, I chanced to meet with Miss Woodburn, the factor's beautiful child. She was only fourteen, but quite grown, and as blooming a piece of womanhood as ever wore kid gloves or black leather. She seemed somewhat embarrassed at my presence, and blushed scarlet, entreating me to prevent one of her dogs from running away with her glove, which he was playfully tossing about in his mouth. The dog would not surrender his charge to any one but to his mistress; and, in the struggle, he bit my hand somewhat severely. You may see the marks of his teeth there still"—(holding out his hand while he spoke.) "Poor Miss Woodburn knew not what to do first: she immediately dropped the book which she was reading—scolded the offending dog to a distance—took up the glove, which the dog at her bidding had dropped, and wrapped it close and firmly around my bleeding hand; a band of long grass served for thread to make all secure; and, in a few days, my hand was in a fair way of recovery—but not so my heart; I felt as if I had been all at once transformed into a gentleman—the soft touch of Miss Eliza's fair finger seemed to have transformed me, skin, flesh, and bones, into another species of being. I shook like an aspen leaf whenever I thought of our interesting interview; and I could observe that Eliza changed colour, and looked out at the window whenever I entered the room But, sir, I am too particular, and I will now hasten to a close." I entreated him (said the parson) to go on in his own way, and without any reference to my leisure. He then proceeded:—"Well, sir, from year to year I prospered, and from year to year got more deeply in love with the angel which moved about in my presence. At last our attachment became manifest to the young lady's parent; and, to my great surprise, it was proposed that we should

make a voyage to New York, and there be united in matrimony. All this while, sir, I thought of my own dear Sally, and the thought not unfrequently made me miserable; but what was Sally to me now?—perhaps she was dead—perhaps she was married—perhaps—but I could scarcely think it—she had forgot me; and then the blooming rose-bud was ever in my presence, and hallowed me, by its superior purity and beauty, into a complete gentleman. Well, married we were, at New York, and, for several months, I was the happiest of men; and my dear wife (I know it) the happiest of women; but the time of her labour approached, and child and mother lie buried in the cemetery at New York, where we had now fixed our residence." (Here poor Thomas wept plentifully, and, after a pause, proceeded)—"I could not reside longer in a place which was so dismally associated in my mind; so, having wound up my worldly affairs, and placed my little fortune—about one thousand pounds—in the bank, I embarked for Europe, along with my father and mother-in-law, who were going home to end their days in the place of their nativity, Belfast, in Ireland. I determined upon landing at the Cove of Cork, to visit once more my native village, and to have at least one interview with Sally. I learned, on my arrival at Largo, that Sally was married to the old captain. I resolved, however, ere I went finally to settle in Belfast, to have one stolen peep at my first love—my own dear Sally. I came upon her whilst repeating my name in her prayers, I embraced her convulsively—repeated her name twice in her hearing—heard her scream—saw her faint—kissed her fondly again and again—and, strangers appearing, I immediately absconded."

"This," said the minister, "explains all; but, go on—I am anxious to hear the conclusion of your somewhat eventful history."

"Why, I was off immediately for Belfast, where I at present reside with my father-in-law, whose temper, since the loss of his child, has been much altered for the worse. But I am here on a particular errand, in which your kind offices, sir—for I have heard of your goodness of heart—may be of service to me. I observed the death of the old captain in the newspaper, and I am here once more to enjoy an interview with his widow. I wish you, sir, to break the business to her; meanwhile, I will lodge at the Old Inn, Mrs Laing's, at Anstruther, and await your return."

I agreed (continued the parson of Kilrenny) to wait upon the widow; and to see, in fact, how the wind set, in regard to "first love." I found her, as I expected, neatly clad in her habilaments of widowhood, and employed in making some dresses for a sister's marriage. I asked and obtained a private interview, when I detailed, as cautiously as I could, the particulars of Thomas Laing's history. I could observe that her whole frame shook occasionally, and that tears came, again and again, into her eyes. I was present, but a fortnight ago, at their first interview at the inn; and I never saw two human beings evince more real attachment for each other. On their bended knees, and with faces turned towards heaven, did they unite in thanking God that he had permitted them to have another interview with each other in this world of uncertainty and death. It has been since discovered that the letter announcing Laing's death was a forgery of the old captain, which has reconciled his widow very much to the idea of shortening her days of mourning. In a word, this evening, and in a few hours, I am going to unite the widower and the widowed, together with a younger sister and a fine young sailor, in the holy bonds of matrimony; and, as a punishment for your giving me all this trouble in narrating this story, I shall insist upon your eating fresh herring, with the fresh-herring Presbytery of St Andrew's, which meets here at Mrs Laing's to day, and afterwards witnessing the double ceremony.

To this I assented, and certainly never spent an evening more agreeably than that which I divided betwixt the merry lads of St Andrew's Presbytery, and the fair dames and maidens of Cellardykes who graced the marriage ceremony. Such dancing as there was, and such screaming, and such music, and such laughing; yet, amidst it all, Mr and Mrs Laing preserved that decent decorum, which plainly said, "We will not mar the happiness of the young; but we feel the goodness and providence of our God too deeply, to permit us to join in the noisy part of the festivity."

"The fair maid of Cellardykes," with her kind-hearted husband—I may mention, for the satisfaction of my fair readers in particular—may now be seen daily at their own door, and in their own garden, on the face of the steep which overlooks the village. They have already lived three years in complete happiness, and have been blessed with two as fine healthy children as a Cellardykes sun ever rose upon. Mr Laing has become an elder in the church, and both husband and wife are most exemplary in the discharge of their religous, as well as relative duties. God has blessed them with an ample competence; and sure is the writer of this narrative, that no poor fisher man or woman ever applied to this worthy couple without obtaining relief.

One circumstance more, and my narrative closes. As Mr Laing was one evening taking a walk along the seashore, viewing the boats as they mustered for the herring fishing, he was shot at from behind one of the rocks, and severely wounded in the shoulder—the ball, or slug-shot having lodged in the clavicle, and refusing, for some days, to be extracted. The hue-and-cry was immediately raised; but the guilty person was nowhere to be seen. He had escaped in a boat, or had hid himself in a crevice of the rock, or in some private and friendly house in the village. Poor Thomas Laing was carried home to his distracted wife more dead than alive; and Dr Goodsir being called, disclosed, that in his present state the lead could not be extracted. Poor Sarah was never a moment from her husband's side, who fevered, and became occasionally delirious—talking incoherently of murder, and shipwreck, and Woodburn, and love, and marriage, and Sarah Black. All within his brain was one mad wheel of mixed and confused colours, such as children make, when they wheel a stick, dyed white, black, and red, rapidly around. Suspicion, from the first, fell upon the brother of the boy Rob Paterson, whom Laing had killed many years before. Revenge is the most enduring, perhaps, of all the passions, and rather feeds upon itself than decays. Like fame, "it acquires strength by time;" and it was suspected that Dan Paterson, a reckless and a dissipated man, had done the deed. In confirmation of this supposition, Dan was nowhere to be found, and it was strongly suspected that his wife, and his son, who returned at midnight with the boat, had set Dan on shore somewhere on the coast, and that he had effected his escape. Death, for some time, seemed every day and hour nearer at hand; but at last the symptoms softened, the fever mitigated, the swelling subsided, and, after much careful and skilful surgery, most admirably conducted by Dr Goodsir's son, the ball was extracted. The wound closed without mortification; and, in a week or two, Mr Laing was, not only out of danger, but out of bed, and walking about, as he does to this hour, with his arm in a sling. It was about the period of his recovery, that Dan Paterson was taken as he was skulking about in the west country, apparently looking out for a ship in which to sail to America. He was immediately brought back to Cellardykes, and lodged in Anstruther prison. Mr Laing would willingly have forborne the prosecution; but the law behoved to have its course. Dan was tried for "maiming with the intention of murder," and was con-

demned to fourteen years' transportation. This happened in the year 1822, the year of the King's visit to Scotland. Mr and Mrs Laing actually waited upon his Majesty King George the Fourth, at the palace of Dalkeith, and, backed by the learned judge and counsel, obtained a commutation of the punishment, from banishment to imprisonment for a limited period. The great argument in his favour was the provocation he had received. Dan Paterson now inhabits a neat cottage in the village, and Mr Laing has quite set him up with a boat of his own, ready rigged and fitted for use. He has entirely reformed, has become a member of a temperance society, and his wife and family are as happy as the day is long. Mr and Mrs Laing are supplied with the very best of fish, and stockings and mittens are manufactured by the Patersons for the little Laings, particularly during boisterous weather, when fishing is out of the question. Thus has a wise Providence made even the wrath of man to praise him. The truth of the above narrative may be tested any day, by waiting upon the Rev. Mr Dickson, or upon the parties themselves at Braehead of Cellardykes.

TREES AND BURNS.

Woods, natural woods, are most beautiful. To wander all day long amongst bushes, hazels, oaks, thorns, of every hue and fruit—the haw, crab, and sloe—is most delightful. To lose one's self, as it were, at every turn, and to be arrested by some new feature, ever and anon as you thread your mazy course through the pathless wood, is a pleasure, the recollection of which still haunts and sweetens my dreams of early being—

> "In life's morning march
> When my bosom was young."

I don't like forests—they are too stiff and stately—they are like a tea-and-turn-out party—sombre, silent, and affected. They have not the easy negligence, the elegant simplicity, the "*simplex munditiis*" of woods. They are always on their high-horses, and darken whilst they look down upon and despise the underwood. I had as rather associate with a conclave of high churchmen or consulting doctors, as with a regular, well-planted, and well-fenced plantation. Here man has played the tailor with nature; and, in cutting down her skirts, has deprived her of all that is graceful in drapery and folding. He has made a Bond Street exquisite of the subject. But, far and beyond all other inanimate objects, I have always been in love with single, individual, separate trees. You cannot be truly—as the song has it—in love with many *fair dames* at one and the same time; I can never, on that account, bear to hear the song sung, which begins thus—

> "I'm in love with twenty,
> I'm in love with twenty,
> And I adore as many more—
> There's nothing like a plenty."

I absolutely quarreled with an old friend for his frequent singing of this abominable and heretical song, and am scarcely reconciled to him to this hour, though he has long ago limited his love to one object—he has been married these thirty years. In the same spirit, and on the same principle, I affirm, that no child, boy, girl, man, or woman, can be truly in love with *two trees* at one and the same time. Oh! I remember well the old ash tree that occupied the corner of our kail-yard. There the same pyet built yearly her nest, and brought *out* and *up* her young. To be sure I *tithed* them occasionally and taught her offspring to imitate speaking most abominably; but still the old lady and gentleman returned to their tree and their branch, and even to the same cleft of the branch, annually; and my spirit rejoiced within me, as I lifted up mine eyes and beheld the black and white tail of the dam, as she sat, from morn to night, upon her beautifully-spotted, black and white eggs. There, underneath that very tree, I did sit and construct my first paper kite; there did I play, from morn to night, with the cat and her kitten; there did I shelter myself from the shower, and from the meridian heat; there did I repeat my morning and evening prayer, (short, it is true, but pithy—it was the Lord's Prayer, with an additional petition in behalf of my only surviving parent, my mother;) there did I count my slain on returning from fishing expeditions; and there, my dear departed friend and cousin, did you and I consociate, eve after eve, in true and holy affection. Alas! the cold earth has closed over one of the kindest hearts and clearest heads I ever had occasion to know anything about; but God's will be done. We all hasten to the same place, however different our courses. Peace, my dear companion, to thy manes! We shall meet I hope, anon. In the meantime, I was speaking of the old ash tree at Auldwa's, which I have taken the liberty to transplant to Dunsyett. But our common friend, and the friend of many past generations, is now laid prostrate (as I am informed) with the earth. How is the mighty fallen, and the lofty laid low, and the strong one broken and smashed in his strength! The storm, the dreadful, unexampled storm, which lately swept over our island with a whirlwind's impetuosity and a hurricane's strength, has bent the gallant mast, and sunk the noble ship, and buried its thousands and thousands of fathers, and brothers, and husbands, and wives, and daughters in the deep sea. It has uptorn forests, scattered woods to the heavens, and (*inter alia*) has stooped from its altitudes to lay my old and dear companion prostrate. How many tempests, my poor uprooted friend, hast thou not braved!—nay, when the fire of heaven split and splintered the adjoining oak and ash, thou didst escape unhurt. The awful tempest of winter 1794–5, deprived thee, indeed, of a branch or two; but thou wert still in the manhood of thy being when the west wind blew as "'twad blawn its last"—and M'Diarmid's newspaper is enriched with thy remains.

My next associate of the tree species, was the "*Castle Beech.*" Oh, what a tree it was, and still (I humbly hope) is!—for the hand of man is not yet formed in the womb which will dare to cut it down; and it stands mighty in its individual girth, awful in its spread, and sheltered in its position. This tree is the chronicler of my school days at Wallacehall: on the smooth and ample bark of that tree are imprinted or obliterated recollections of a fearful nature. Oh! who dares to take a peep into the charnel house of fifty years? There they are, playing it hard and happy, at dools, toosty, or England and Scotland.

> "Alas! regardless of their doom,
> The little victims play:
> No sense have they of ills to come—
> No cares beyond to-day!"

But let forty years, with Juggernaut wheels, crash and creak over us, and where are the happy hearts and merry voices? The sea will answer; for she has had her full share. The river, the bloody river *Nith*, will and must answer; for in its deceitful waters was lost my old and kind class-fellow and companion, Richard Reid. The west must give up its dead, and the east answer to my call. Where am I? My dear schoolfellows, where are you? Why don't you answer? Alas! *at sixty*, I can scarcely count six contemporaries who still breathe with me the breath of heaven, and rejoice in a protracted though misimproved existence. But the old beech, my kind friend Mr Watt of the Castle informs me, is still standing, though almost by a miracle, for his branches are so large and numerous that he groaned, and creaked, and swung most dreadfully under the tempest's shock. But it would not do; even the prince of the aerial powers was foiled at last, and was compelled to

desist from his unhallowed attempt. The Castle Beech has weathered the storm; and there are hearts in every land which will rejoice in the information which I now convey.

But the "Three Brethren," the friends and companions of my more mature years, are now no more. They have fallen with those Cedars of Lebanon, the mighty monarchs of Arbigland—*they* have perished, and in their fate have nearly involved that of their intelligent and benevolent proprietor. But my heart reverts to Collestoun, and to the banks of the blue and silver Nith, and to the Three Brethren. The pages of the intelligent *Times* (county newspaper) are wet with the tears of lamentation. But the *Times* knows not—it could not and it cannot know—the one half that honest Allan Cunningham and I know about these remarkable trees. Their traditional history is this:—

Prior to the discovery of Virginia, and of the consequent tobacco trade, by means of which Glasgow, from being a comparatively insignificant town, became a large and a prosperous mercantile city, and whilst Manchester in England was almost equally obscure and unimportant, there was no properly constructed highway through Dumfriesshire, betwixt these two mercantile depots. There was indeed, along the banks of the Nith, the trace of the old Roman road; but this was obscure, in many places obliterated, and, in all, narrow and unaccommodating to wheel carriages. Indeed, the road in many cases was impracticable unless on horses; and these too in some places were in danger of disappearing in mosses and quagmires. In this state of things, to talk of or think of inns, or public-houses of accommodation, was out of the question. *Where there is no demand, there can be no supply*—that is a clear case; yet still, a certain overland intercourse was carried on, betwixt these two great national marts, Glasgow and Manchester; and a merchant from the one city was in the habit of mounting a strong nag, and meeting with a merchant from the other city, at what was deemed the *half-way point*—at the place, namely, where a large tree, with three outspread and sheltering branches, not only marked the spot of tryst, but afforded partial shade and shelter. (The reason why these branches were afterwards denominated the Three Brethren, will form the subject of a future communication.) Well, by previous arrangement and appointment, the Glasgow and the Manchester merchants met and transacted business under this tree, and then retraced their steps homewards; and this continued for many years to be the nearest and the most commonly frequented line of communication betwixt Glasgow and Manchester. It was in this way, originally, that the benevolent founder of the free school of Closeburn, Mr Wallace, a native of that parish, and a Glasgow merchant, carried on this extensive business with Manchester. Many a time has the worthy founder of the most celebrated institution in the south of Scotland, (with which the name of Mundell will be associated till latest ages,) been seen sitting upon a stone rolled to the root of this immense tree, and transacting business with a Manchester merchant, similarly placed with himself. In process of time, the international intercourse increased—post-chaises succeeded to strong saddle horses, the roads were improved, and an inn, or house of accommodation, became absolutely necessary. It was on this occasion, that the once famous, though now comparatively obscure inn, called of late years Brownhill, arose—an inn resorted to by travellers of all ranks, in preference to any which even Dumfries in former times could afford—an inn, celebrated as the frequent resort of Robert Burns, who used to hold high carousal here, with its former convivial landlord, Mr Bacon, in whose house, and on one of the panes of glass in the window, were originally written those well-known lines of Burns, beginning—

"Curs'd be the man, the veriest wretch in life,
The crouching vassal to the tyrant wife,
Who has no will but by her high permission—
Who has not sixpence but in her possession.
I'd charm her with the magic of a switch," &c.

As I happen to know the particular circumstances which accompanied the writing of these lines, I shall conclude this chapter on trees, by relating them.

Burns lived at this time at Ellisland, about two miles lower down the vale than the Three Brethren, and about three miles from Brownhill. Much of his duty as a gauger lay about the village of Brownhill. Now, Brownhill was a very convenient half-way house betwixt Thornhill and his home at Ellisland; and, accordingly, Burns' little stout pony (which I remember well, though I forget the name) would seldom pass Brownhill. One day, whilst a boy at the free school of Wallacehall, I chanced to be lingering about the stable door at Brownhill, when Burns alighted from his pony, *wet and weary*, and, giving the beast a flap on the hinder extremity, exclaimed—"There! make you comfortable for the night, in the best way you can—and so will the poor gauger!" Burns looked at me very closely; but I was unknown to him at that time, (though I knew him personally afterwards;) and, muttering, "One of Mundell's," passed on. What follows is from undoubted authority; namely, one of the party of three, who enjoyed this very merry evening. Bacon and Burns were their bowl of punch a-piece, as well as my friend, and were in high talk and song; but Mrs Bacon, who did not partake of the festivity, and who, in fact, was the support of the house, refused to produce the materials for the fourth bowl. High words arose betwixt her and her husband; who, as well as Burns and my friend, had by this time given indications of their having

"A wee drap in their e'e;"

and Mrs Bacon hid the keys and went to bed. Ere Burns went to repose, (or next morning,) he inscribed, with his ready wit, and equally ready diamond, the lines mentioned, on the window pane.

KIRKYARDS.

KIRKYARDS are to me exceedingly interesting. Alas. those nearest and dearest to me are now the tenants of these silent retirements. They contain subjects of intense and protracted recollection. Whenever I have an hour to spare after dinner in my pedestrian wanderings, I am sure to deviate into a churchyard, and there to spell and stumble my way through and over a multiplicity of graves and monuments. But, instead of dealing in generalities, I shall speak of two particular cases, known to myself, in the churchyard of the parish of Closeburn. One is on your right hand as you enter and pass Elder Boe, on Sunday, at the church stile. The stone is merely an erect headstone, and of considerable dimensions. The inscription is—"Here lies Richard Reid, aged 16, who perished in crossing the water of Nith in 1794." Richard, as well as his brother Stephen, now Colonel Reid, were my particular companions at Wallacehall school. We were class-fellows. Oh! what fun and frolic we have had together! The Castle Wood, Barmuir Wood, Gilchrist Land Wood, the Pothouse Wood, the Whitston Cleughs and the Gravel Walk, could tell, if they were permitted, many tales of us three. What nests did we not find! what nuts did we not gather! what sloes did we not pocket! what brambles did we not eat! and what *hind* or raspberries did we not bruise and convert into *red wine*. And, then, what tree so tall as not to admit our ascent! what thicket so dense as not to be penetrated! what eel so lively as not to be decapitated and skinned! and what trout so cunning as to escape the temptation of our nicely-prepared baits! At England and Scotland, too—that most expressive game of former Border feuds—we were most expert; and

have seen many suns descend on our protracted contests at shinty. But, alas! harvest arrived, and with it the vacation; the oats ripened, and so did the hazel nuts. The report was, that the Barjarg Woods were most plentifully supplied with ripe and brown *leamers*. We could not—we never tried to resist the temptation. But the rapid river Nith lay betwixt us and the object of our travel. It had rained, but was now fair; and the water, when we arrived at its banks, did not seem even moved or swollen. Stephen and I hesitated; Richard was a bold, manly lad, somewhat older. He plunged at once into the stream, and bade us follow; so, indeed, we did. Ere we had gained one third of the way, upon the stream we observed bits of wood, and various floating substances in it. We became alarmed, and called aloud on Richard; but he turned round and laughed us to scorn. We would not stand this, but pushed on, he still keeping in advance. The powerful current had now reached his waist, and, even though he had wished to turn, he could not. The stones were beginning to creep from beneath our feet. All at once, a large piece of floating timber came down upon poor Richard's position, and he was borne away by the united force of the obstructed wood and the stream. He fell; the timber floated over him, and he again arose; but he was in much deeper water, and manifestly apprehended danger. He screamed aloud, and we rushed forward—his brother Stephen and I—to the rescue; but we were all instantly hurled along into a deep and whirling pool. Over the banks of this eddy there grew and hung a broom bush; more by accident than management, I got a hold of it. Stephen was struggling near me, and I caught him with the other hand. I struggled desperately, and got myself and my companion into the face of a soft and clay brow. I held like grim death, and, at last, surmounted the steep. Though stupified, I saw that one was awanting, and I rushed—for Stephen was insensible—along the brink of the pool. At the foot of it, and where the water began to shallow, I saw poor Richard tumbling over without any signs of life. In an instant I had a hold of his garment, and had actually pulled him considerably to one side, when, my feet coming in contact with a large stone, I fell backwards, lost my hold, and the body of poor Richard was found, next day, a mile and a half below, at the bottom of Porter's Hole.

On the opposite side of this churchyard, there is a flat flag-stone, with the following inscription—"Here lie the mortal remains of William Herdman, Weaver in Auldwa's of Gilchristland."

Poor Willie Herdman! What associations do not these two magic words awaken! When Gibraltar stood nobly out, under the command of an Elliot, against the combined strength of France and Spain, thou wast there to send the missing hot cannon balls into the hulls of the enemy's floating batteries. But, on returning to thy native Nottingham, to taste of its pure and salubrious ales, thy house was desolate—father, mother, and sister, all dead—and the place which knew them owned another tenant. Thy heart sank within thee; and having been bred a weaver in thy youth, thou didst take the road for Glasgow; but, at Brownhill, chance brought thee acquainted with Archy Tait of Auldwa's, and with him didst thou ply thy trade till the mournful end of thy days. But it was neither as a soldier, nor as a weaver, that I remember thee with so much interest. It was as the best bait-fisher in the south of Scotland—it was as my first preceptor in that most delightful art. I see thee still, before sunrise, ten miles amidst the mountains, and I hear the plash of the large new-run sea-trout, as it "turns up its silver scaling to the light" amidst the dark brown flood. At all times, and almost in all states of the weather and the water thy skill was triumphant, and from thee I derived that art which no man knows, unless instructed by me, to this hour—the art of fishing *up*, and not *down* a mountain stream, with prepared bait. But the hour of thy destiny at last arrived, and it was a mournful one. It was one of thy triumphs to kill a dish of trouts, even in the midst of frost, and at New-Year's Day. A wager was laid, and a considerable sum of money was risked, on thy killing a dozen for a New-Year's Day feast. On the last day of the old year, as the time approached, the weather had become boisterous, and snow blasts, mixed with hail, were coursing along the skirts of Queensberry. I was a stout lad in the high class then, and, being in the constant habit of accompanying thee on thy fishing expeditions, I made a point of not being absent on this critical trial of thy skill. Accordingly, when the last day of December 179– dawned, I was by thee aroused from my slumbers, and, in spite of all maternal remonstrances, I agreed to accompany thee to Caple. The day was dark and somewhat cloudy; but there was only a sprinkling of snow on the lower grounds, though the higher seemed to be much whiter. To fortify himself against the inclemency of the weather, poor Willie had provided himself with a supply of what he used to term "his comforter"—namely, some whisky in a bottle. We fished for about two hours in the deeper and unfrozen pools of Caple, and with amazing success. Willie had just killed his eleventh trout, when he turned up the bottom of a pint bottle quite empty. He was not intoxicated, but confused. I had not enjoyed the advantage of "the comforter," and was, consequently, much more collected, and aware of our danger. It was betwixt twelve and one when the day suddenly darkened down, and a terrible snow drift came up the glen. Mitchelslacks was at about a mile and a half's distance. I strongly urged our retreat to that hospitable mansion in the wilderness; but Willie wanted one trout of his tale, and he persevered for about half an hour longer, when he was so fortunate as to complete his number. But by this time the snow drift and wind were absolutely choking, and I could see that his eyes were half shut. He was manifestly in a state of approaching stupor or sleep. I became exceedingly alarmed when he sat, or rather fell down suddenly beneath a projecting rock, saying that he would rest and sleep for a little, and then he would accompany me to Mitchelslacks, as I proposed. I tried to pull him along; but he was incapable of motion. What was to be done?—Poor Willie, who had taught me to fish, and told me so many stories about the wars, and about Nottingham, and England, and who was really a kind-hearted, good-natured creature—poor Willie to perish thus helpless in the drift!—I sprang on with renewed strength; but when I reached Mitchelslacks I fainted, and it was not till I recovered that Willie's dangerous state was learned. Three shepherds, with Mr Harkness at their head, and a suitable accompaniment of dogs, sallied forth, and in a short time reached the spot, but it was too late. There was still heat in the interior, but no motion; the pulse had stopped, and the body was sitting in a reclining posture, leaning against the stone. There were no marks of previous suffering—all was calm and placid in the marble countenance—the eyes shut, and the hands reposing on the fish-basket, as if the last thing he had done was to count his fish!—He was dead.

WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE EDINBURGH MERCHANTS

Sergeant Square, at our next meeting on the Calton Hill, gave me another chapter* of his history :—

I had been several weeks in London, (said he,) wandering about, a solitary individual amidst all the bustle around me. I wanted both a knowledge of the world sufficient to enable me to fix upon any project to better my circumstances, and a friend to advise with. My money, without any extravagance on my part, was gradually melting away. The sailor's life I had no great relish for, and had taken to it more through circumstances over which I had no control, than from choice. Heartily weary of this anxious, dull, monotonous life, I had almost made up my mind to commence a scene of riot and debauchery, until I had spent all I had—to be freed from the cares that riches bring—then go once more to India, and accumulate a sum sufficient to enable me to live independent when I returned. My mind was in a continued state of excitement and alarm. I knew not that I could have deposited my cash in safety in a banking-house, and slept in security, with the power of getting all or any part of it when I required it. I carried it upon my person, wherever I went, like a load of guilt, and at night it was deposited under my pillow—destroying my happiness by day, and disturbing my sleep by night; and often did I look with a suspicious eye upon those who chanced to follow me in my rambles, lest they intended to rob me, although, at the time, they only had occasion, in the course of their avocations, to follow the same track, unheeding me and all around. Even at night, I have awoke from fearful dreams of being robbed and murdered. The misery of riches was strong upon me; yet I was not of an avaricious turn; indeed the only pleasure I had, was in giving a trifling alms to the numerous objects of charity I met in the streets; and I was soon so well known to them all, that I was beset at every turn with clamorous appeals that were never unheeded. I had the name of "The Charitable Gentleman" among the needy wretches who dogged my steps. Guinea after guinea was changed, and vanished with astonishing rapidity; yet the number of beggars increased so fast, that I was several times obliged to change my lodgings to avoid their annoyance; for numbers, after a day or two, go where I would, beset my door, to watch my going out or coming in, and my landladies complained of it as a nuisance.

In this uncomfortable state, for the fourth or fifth time I had removed, and taken a room two pair of stairs up, in Lower Thames Street, equally "unknowing and unknown." The bustle from the different vessels that were either lading or discharging, served to amuse me for the first day, as I sat sad, and gazing upon the busy scene before me, an isolated member of the mass of human beings who appeared all to have some inducement to activity except myself. Weary of myself and all around, I left my seat by the window and walked up to Tower Wharf, where I had scarcely arrived when I met the first known face I had seen in London. I gave an involuntary start, my heart warmed, and a load seemed to fall off my shoulders as we recognised each other. It was James Pettie, an Edinburgh lad, about my own age, whose parents had been very kind to me. Though not rich, they had been above want. His father, a skilful mechanic and industrious man, contrived, by his weekly wages—his only income—to rear a numerous family, and clothe and educate them; nor did he find it necessary to send the beggar empty-handed from his door.

After our first greeting, he told me that he had served his apprenticeship to a merchant in the Luckenbooths; and, shortly after his indentures were completed, had come to London in quest of employment, but hitherto without success. With some hesitation, I learned from him, that his means of subsistence being all spent, he had come down to the river—he scarce knew for what object—either to look for a Leith vessel, to beg a little aid from his countrymen, or engage to go abroad to the West Indies, under indenture, as he might find an opportunity. With joyful hearts, arm in arm we walked towards my lodgings, where I engaged a room for him. After dinner, I made known the unpleasant situation in which I felt myself; whereupon he laughed outright at my distress; and I felt so nettled that I did not interrupt him until he ceased, and begged my pardon.

"John Square," said he, "excuse me; were I to die, I cannot help it. Such a cause of distress! I do not think there is another man in London labouring under your malady. Would that I had only such a cause of misery! Four hundred and sixty pounds, you say you have. Why, my friend, the half of it would make a man of me at once. Then, farewell London, with its dingy streets! and welcome again Auld Reeky! There would not be a single inhabitant who might not read in letters of gold, 'James Pettie, merchant,' over a door garnished on each side with lacken.* Thus would I plant my sapling under the clink of Saint Giles bells, attend it with care until it became a tree, under whose shade I might recline and live comfortably in my old age, and perhaps die a bailie or old lord provost of Edinburgh."

I looked on him in astonishment as he gave way to this train of thought; his countenance, as he concluded, assumed a look of bright joy, and then his head fell upon his bosom with a heavy sigh. Neither of us spoke for a considerable time, for both of us were busy with our own thoughts. He had awakened a new idea in my mind; the future began to rise before me in bright vista; and I nourished the day-dream with rapture—feeling afraid to dissolve it by spoken syllables, or communicate my plans, until I had slept upon them, and turned them over more than once in my mind. That gold, which I had looked upon as the source of my torments, had become the

* See Nos. 202 and 222.

* Lacken—a coarse German cloth, worn by the common people of Scotland. Its importation was superseded by the manufactures of Glasgow and Manchester. The place in the city where it was sold still retains the name of Luckenbooths—a corruption, or Edinburgh mode of pronouncing the word. This at least is our theory, and we have not yet seen a better, unless, perhaps, the name of the booths come from the German word, *Lucken*—"open places." Certainly, the place where the linens and cambrics of the Picardy weavers were sold, still retains the name of the Lawnmarket. The Bourse or Exchange, called here the Purses, was at the west end. No people are more ready to change names than the Scots. We have no faith in the theory of the locked or "locking" booths.

ladder by which I was to ascend to the object of my new-raised ambition.

Diffidence and reserve for the evening took place of the mutual confidence we had at first felt. We parted for the night, each to ruminate alone upon future prospects His were dreary enough, in all likelihood; mine were every hour becoming more bright. I scarcely slept half an hour that night at a stretch; and when I did, it was to act even in my dreams the pictures which my warm fancy had imagined before my eyelids closed. Next morning, with a firm determination to act upon my plans, if I found Pettie willing to second them, I met him at breakfast. He looked dull and dispirited, at times abstracted, as if something of importance weighed upon his spirits, which he wished to communicate and yet shrank from. At length I broke silence:—"James," said I, "you have a knowledge of business which I do not possess. I have a little cash, which you are as much in need of. Now, could we not arrange so as to become partners in trade? I shall advance all that I have to trade with, and any little aid I can give. You shall furnish the knowledge you possess, and conduct the business. 'Square & Pettie' over our door, a full shop, and civility may—nay, must succeed. Are you agreed?"

"With all my heart," replied he, starting at the very idea he was ruminating on; "I do accept, and thank you for your offer. You are my friend indeed; and, believe me, I shall ever be true and grateful. Our interest shall be one. It is all the recompense I can make for the confidence you place in me." Matters were thus satisfactorily arranged between us. My tedium passed off like a threatening cloud, and all was sunshine with us both; bustling among the merchants, purchasing goods fit for our trade, and establishing our credit. All this was easy to be done, for we paid in cash for what we selected; and nothing detained us but the sailing of the "Exchange." We had been at the Edinburgh Coffee-House, and seen the captain, Mr William Beatson, whose terms of the advertisement were to sail every fourteen days, under a penalty. We cleared out on the 18th January, and sailed on the 20th, 1756, from Hawley's Wharf. After a wet and stormy passage of twelve days, we reached the harbour of Leith, all well. When the Tower and houses rose to my sight, gilded by the setting sun, as he shot his rays feebly upon the placid Firth and snow-clad shores, a feeling possessed my mind entirely different from what I had experienced when I last saw them. I was then still the child of adversity; a civil address had never been paid; and I knew not the pleasure of importance. Now, the captain of the "Exchange" bowed assent to my most trifling remark; the common men touched their hats if I spoke to them. When I stood upon the deck, superintending the safe landing of our bales and boxes, I felt that I was a person of no ordinary pretensions; nay, I thought myself injured if any one dressed less genteelly than myself spoke to me without obeisance.

After seeing our goods, to the amount of three hundred and odd pounds, lodged in one of the warehouses on the shore, we proceeded to Edinburgh, to look out for a shop in the Luckenbooths, which, at this time, was no easy matter to obtain, as every eligible situation was in the possession of old-established concerns; and when a vacancy was likely to occur, there were, in general, severals anxiously on the watch. For several weeks we were, through this means, utterly idle, and lived at no small expense. My partner's father was of considerable service to us, in consequence of his having the charge of several properties in the town; one of which, the first flat of that tenement above Writer's Court, was possessed by an old maiden lady in bad health, who spoke of retiring to the country. This kept us in hopes: we were sure to get it as soon as she gave it up in May; but that was the earliest period when we could expect to get possession; yet we commenced business much sooner, for she left the town early in April—and thus began in earnest the firm of "Pettie & Square."

The remainder of my capital now quickly vanished—all was outgo in fitting up our premises in the most elegant manner, and no income. When we opened shop, all that we possessed of ready cash was ten pounds. This, however, gave us no concern, for our sales were good, and our profits considerable; and success was evidently within out reach, if we had acted with common prudence; but our very prospects, by causing us to launch out into extravagance, proved our ruin. We took a house, furnished it expensively, and then had ruinous entertainments in the evening—a habit to which the manner of doing shop business in Edinburgh at this time gave every facility. The shops were frequented principally in the forenoon, at one of the clock; and, as soon as the music bells in St Giles began, the shop doors were locked, and all went home to dinner. They were not opened again till four of the clock—the interval in the summer months being occupied by playing at golf in Burntsfield Links, or walking on the esplanade. At eight, they were shut for the night; and, indeed, in the winter months, few of the principal shops were open after dark. Thus we had much time on our hands. We spent it in riot; and such doings soon brought us into difficulties. At the the end of two years, I found we were involved in debt to nearly the sum we had commenced with, and that too without the means of liquidation. My partner thought nothing of the calls that were made for bills which we could not answer; but, as for myself, I felt the greatest uneasiness, concealing myself, if possible, from the sight of creditors, while James faced them with the greatest *nonchalance*. For a time we succeeded in talking them into good humour; but, promises often broken soon irritate creditors; and so we soon found—for they became more obdurate and determined to obtain payment. The evil day could be put off no longer—utter ruin was now staring us in the face.

Too late I began to regret my foolish extravagance; but my partner was still the old man; and when I proposed to give up all to our creditors, ashamed as I was now to walk the streets, lest I should meet some one to whom I was indebted, he tried to buoy me up against even hope. Now again I envied the time when I ran through those streets I now dreaded, a destitute orphan, with few to give to me, yet none to claim from me. In our elegant house I felt no pleasure; yet still I clung to my new acquired habits, or they clung to me. Resolution was formed after resolution, and formed to be broken as soon as formed. In this state were our desperate affairs, when, one morning, James, who had been rather remiss in his attentions to the shop for some time back, came into it as I sat ruminating upon our melancholy prospects, and upbraiding myself for my consummate folly in throwing from me this golden opportunity of becoming independent. He roused me from my reverie.

"Mr Square," said he, "there is no use in being sad; grief cannot bring us out of our present difficulties. I agree with you that we have drawn rather largely upon the profits of the shop, and the inexorable till has, for some time, replied to our demands, 'overdrawn;' but there will soon be a deposit made that shall liquidate the balance, and set us in as easy circumstances as we commenced; and then, Square, let us see if we cannot, by adhering to a last-for-all good resolution, realize our ambitious hopes. I never for a moment forget that I owe all to your support, and it gives me pleasure to say I will have it in my power to repay it soon. I have seen my error. We began business young, and with too much capital. The fault was all on my side, who ought to have guided. I have taken the lead in error. Neither of us, until lately, knew the value of money, or the difficulty of making it, as it is only to be made, in merchandising, shilling by shilling. We though

it would never have an end until the end was upon us. You look surprised, and well you may; but there is no occasion; the truths I have uttered are not new to me, although I wanted resolution to act upon them, and followed another course, until I found, by sad experience, that staid industry and prudent economy give far more pleasure to the mind than the fevered excitement of extravagance and riot."

I looked upon him as he spoke; a ray of comfort shone once more upon me. I had unbounded confidence in his truth, and talent for business; and surprise to see the change so suddenly wrought upon my hitherto volatile and pleasure-hunting partner, held me silent for a time, while he himself sat absorbed in thought by my side. At length I inquired how he proposed to retrieve our shattered fortunes.

"It is a long story," replied he; "and I can tell it now without one feeling of that anguish which would have wrung my tortured bosom a few months since. You remember the happy days when we used to amuse ourselves on Bell's Brae; and the pretty, lively Helen Gray, who was the favourite of us all."

"Quite well," replied I; "she is at this moment before me, with her laughing blue eyes, and her long yellow hair streaming in the wind, as she ran like a sylph in our sports."

"The same," continued he. "She was our neighbour on the same flat in Forrester's Wynd. We grew up together; and as she approached woman's estate, she grew more lovely. A thousand little acts of kindness passed between us ere we knew what love meant; but at length it was confessed, and we spent our time in dreams of future joys, far distant as they yet behoved to be. I was only eighteen, she sixteen. There were two years of my apprenticeship to serve; and, even after this, money to save to enable me to commence business for myself ere I could think of marriage. For youthful lovers this appeared an age, but not of sadness, for we were not restrained in our interviews by our parents, who never suspected our loves, or the vows that had passed between us. The evening of each day was spent by me in her father's house, or by her in mine. Oh! how quickly these evenings passed away!—alas! too quick. Our happiness was too great to endure. I was within six months of completing my engagement and being free, when our hopes were crushed in the most cruel manner. Deacon Weir, a man well to do in the city, and reported very rich, had seen my Helen, and became enamoured of her, as one who is above fifty may be enamoured of one scarce eighteen. His constant visits at her father's house first alarmed, then roused my jealousy. He had not yet declared his intentions; yet Helen saw cause to weep, as I told my fears, and vowed anew eternal love. I felt uneasy, and became restless, for there was no mistaking the tender gaze of the Deacon, when he looked on Helen, nor the dark frown that came over his brow when he looked at me. Helen's parents were overjoyed at the attentions he paid their lovely daughter, and did all in their power to promote the union they fondly anticipated. Poor Helen felt as keenly as I did, but still she only wept in secret; for her parents had no suspicion that her heart was in my possession, and she could not explain—she even had no cause of complaint—while the Deacon had not as yet declared his passion, and the parents had not hinted their purpose Soon, however, they perceived that my presence was disagreeable to their favoured visiter, and their manner at once changed. At first I was received coolly, even slightingly, then got gentle hints that my visits were unwelcome; yet I resolved to endure all. Meanwhile, Helen had been a stranger in my father's for some time, and looked sad. She was, I could perceive, watched, and under restraint; and when I entered, she was often sent, under some pretext, into an adjoining room. Soon matters came to a crisis; her mother bluntly asked me if I was not ashamed to be so much in another person's house, where I was far from welcome. I, with a heart like to burst, seized my hat and made a hasty exit, with my mind in a tumult of wounded vanity. Oh! how I loathed myself, and all the world beside, during the time occupied by my progress between Forrester's Wynd and the King's Park! I even hated Helen herself, as, hurried on by this gust of passion, I rushed down the High Street and Canongate. Yes, I could have forsworn her, as the cause of my present humiliation; and yet I had no cause of complaint against her. Pride, while I was carried along like a feather before the wind, completely banished love; nor did I tarry even to draw a breath, until I had reached the ascent above the ruins of St Anthony's Chapel. It was a dark and starless night, fitting the distraction that possessed my soul. Exhausted by my feelings more than fatigue, I threw myself upon the soft turf, and, burying my face in my hands, gave vent to a flood of tears.

My first resolve was to leave Edinburgh, and go—no matter where or what I suffered, so that I was far away. Gradually I became more composed, as this resolution became stronger in my mind. I arose with a dogged feeling of the propriety of my determination. No thought of what my kind parents must suffer, upon my unaccountable flight, had ever crossed my mind. My attention was now attracted by several lights moving in various directions through the park, in the neighbourhood of the Palace. I was walking with a firm step towards Croft-an-righ, on my way to Leith, to spend the night, and look after a vessel in the morning, when one of the lights caught my eye at a small distance from Milne's Tomb. I stood for a moment, wondering what the people who carried the lights were in quest of, when the voice of wailing and distress fell upon my ear. As it approached, one of the most moving sights a mortal ever witnessed, riveted me to the spot. It was a mother in the extreme of anguish, accompanied by some sympathizing neighbours, searching for her son, a child who had wandered. The sight quite unmanned me. There is an eloquence in real suffering that touches even the most selfish. My heart abraided me for the purpose I was bent upon only the minute before. I now saw before me the anguish I was about to heap upon those I was bound by the laws of nature to comfort and cherish. My resolve at once fled; and to their inquiries if I had seen the innocent, I answered no, I was sorry I had not, with a voice that thrilled through every nerve in my frame. The distracted mother cried, 'O my dear Billy! I shall never see you in life again; God pity me—I shall go distracted for my babe!' then hurried off to resume her search, leaving me in a state of mind little better than her own. At this moment, I recollected that, in crossing the stile from the Duke's Walk to the hill, I thought I had heard a few faint sobs, but paid no attention to the circumstance at the time. The idea now flashed across my mind that they might have proceeded from the child, and, urged by humanity, I followed the group that had just left me, requesting them to follow me to the stile, as I had some faint hopes the object of their search might be found where I heard the sounds. My anxiety that I might be the means of saving the child banished every other thought; and, as we hurried over the park, when we came near the stile, I seized the lanthorn, and rushed to the spot. No babe was there on the hither side of the wall; that it could be on the other, no one conceived possible. The mother's hopes, which had been raised, now sank into despair, till the rocks echoed her wailings. All at once, in one of the intervals of her exhaustion, I thought I heard a faint cry of "Mammy" at some distance on the inside of the wall. A few bounds bore me to the spot, where lay the object of our search, almost spent with hunger and fatigue Happy that I had been the instrument of saving the child, I withdrew from the enraptured mother's blessings, and returned home,

to pass a sleepless night in the house of the parents I had resolved to render miserable.

"So inconsistent are we in our resolves, that, before morning, Helen Gray was, if possible, more the object of my love than ever. Her sad and beautiful face was the object of my mental portrayments through the whole of that night; and, that her sadness was caused by her affection for me, endeared her to me a thousandfold. Next day was to bring me farther confirmation of her parents' suspicions. Helen had heard the harsh manner in which her mother had spoken to me, and, in anger, had declared to her our engagements. The rage of her parents knew no bounds. Her father came and charged my parents with privacy to my seduction of the affections of his daughter. My father heard him with astonishment, and would have 'aughed, had not his anger overpowered the impulse. The consequence was, a deadly enmity between the two families, who had lived on the best of terms for fifteen years. My life was rendered bitter by the taunts of my father and my disappointed hopes. Helen Gray I could by no device get spoken to again; she was kept a close prisoner in the house, or attended by her mother, Sunday and Saturday, until they got her married to Deacon Weir. I saw her for the last time before I left Edinburgh; it was the Sunday after her marriage, as they carried her, the victim of their avarice, to be kirked. It was by stealth I obtained that, to me, heart-breaking glance; for I would not for a world have pained her by appearing in her sight. I think I never saw a more melancholy-looking bride: her eyes were fixed upon the ground as she moved listlessly along; her face was pale and pensive; and I thought she feared to look up lest she should see me, and be unable to restrain the anguish that was upon her mind. With a heart like to burst from all the feelings that can torture man, I returned home. My indentures had been discharged a few days before; my resolution had been this second time cool and deliberately taken; but now with the approbation of my parents, who pitied, but could not relieve me. Every exertion was made to fit me out, and I sailed for London the second week after Helen's marriage. The offer you made me there I do not think I would have accepted, had it not been for an idea that crossed my mind as soon as you made it—for Edinburgh, as a residence, was hateful to me, as you can easily understand. I had, by your proposal, unexpectedly obtained an opportunity of returning in comparative opulence, and, by a show of wealth and prosperity, make the parents of Helen regret that they had sacrificed her for wealth, and slighted the object of her love, with whom she might have been happy and affluent.

"Excuse me, my friend, if I have been the cause of much uneasiness to you to gratify my private revenge. I was pleased that you were not more averse than I was to pomp and extravagance; you gave in to it from your ignorance of the value of money; I followed it from vanity and revenge; but I will make amends.

"Upon our first arrival in town, I inquired for Helen, and learned that she was a good and exemplary wife, though far from a happy one; for her husband, upon the news of my return to Edinburgh, had, for a time, been unkind to her, actuated, doubtless, by jealousy; yet most carefully have I avoided giving him the smallest cause—never having even passed his door if I could avoid it by going round about; and, if there was a party given where the deacon and Helen might have been expected to be, I never went. Even if we met by accident on the street, I hurried past and looked not at her, expecting, by these means, to prevent any uneasiness to her, to whom I would rather have died than caused a painful thought. Two years since, in a conversation with Mr Sandilands, the deacon's law-agent, he told me in confidence, that he had left his wife his sole legatee and executor—laughing at same time, and saying, she would be a prize to some young fellow about town—a lovely widow and a heavy purse. My heart leaped in my bosom, yet I appeared to hear him unmoved; but, ever since that day, I have watched her husband as a vulture would its prey. He was evidently in a declining state; but, with a tenacity of life only possessed by reptiles, he clung to it for eighteen months, during which Helen was his attentive nurse. Oh, how, in my most convivial moments, have I thought of her kind attentions to the hated usurper of my heart's treasure; and envied him, and wished him dead a thousand times! These feelings have all along acted like a goad to me, and made me plunge into folly to deaden my reflections. The sun of happiness has once more dawned upon me. Three months are passed quickly over my head since Deacon Weir's death. Helen is once again, if possible, more my own than ever—now the unincumbered mistress of her own actions. Now, sir, nothing but a regard to the opinions of the world—which in actions connected with it cannot be disregarded with impunity—prevents our union. I have made to her a faithful statement of our affairs, and the obligations we lie under to you. This day Mr Sandilands is to advance us two hundred and fifty pounds upon our bond, she being cautioner until her business is wound up and given into my hands as her husband. This is the happiest day of my life. Helen is my own, and my friend and benefactor shall have no longer before him the fear of creditors."

In a transport of joy I started to my feet, and shook him by the hand. Above all, I rejoiced that we would be enabled to give every one his own to the utmost farthing. I had been for several months completely cured of my extravagant habits. My partner had now no inducement to resume them; so we entered into an agreement to renounce them for ever, and become, not penurious, but economical merchants. That evening I went to sup with Widow Weir, the now affianced bride of my partner. When we entered the house, I had no conception of the beauty of Helen. I had heard her lover's praises of her as a matter of course—all sweethearts being paragons in each other's eyes; yet of all the females I had ever seen she was the loveliest. I was lost in amazement. Her weeds of sorrow, too, were an embellishment—maugre the opinion of the deacon's ghost. The evening flew over our heads I scarce knew how, so bewildered was I, and intoxicated by my feelings of admiration. Our early Bell's Brae acquaintance was renewed, and every anecdote of joyous youth talked over—the days when sorrow was scarce known by name, and hope was still young in the heart. I told her, and I told her truth, I never could have recognised the girl Helen in my present hostess. But I weary you with my minuteness. The widow had won my heart too; and I was, until my better judgment prevailed, the rival of my partner; yet it was only in my secret thoughts. I worshipped that matchless woman, and resolved never to marry until I met her equal.

We were now quite steady and intent upon our business. Our embarrassments were all removed. Those wholesale dealers who, a few weeks before, either refused or gave us credit grudgingly, now solicited us to purchase their goods. Our forenoons were cheerful. Headache and languor had become strangers to us. Our boon companions dropped off, one by one, like greedy leeches, when they could no longer suck our substance; and, in their place, came the staid and thriving merchant, whose friendship and countenance were a prop. Fully were we now convinced, that balls and feasting are no more fruitful of prosperity than of solid enjoyment, adopting the true mercantile caution and distrust even of those who confer a favour by giving their presence; for the obligation lies truly upon the inviter to the feast, not the invited. I had often felt this truth, and cursed my folly, on the following day, for

having gone, to please a man who loved company and was fond of show, to garnish his table, and bring home a headache for my reward, with the loss of half a day, to murmur at both him and his feast. We now gave no dinners, and were, of course, invited but to few; and, what pleased us more, we now began to bank, nor feared that hateful word, "overdrawn." Thus time run on, until the marriage of Helen Gray and James Pettie. They had the happiness to unite their destiny with the consent and blessing of both families, who were, if not as friendly as they once had been, apparently reconciled.

Confidence and hope had now taken the place of that feverish excitement which gloomy forebodings had so long nourished. We began to extend our business. There was at this time a considerable trade with America, the exports being Bibles ready bound, and religious books, linens, and other articles. We entered into it with spirit, and had no cause to regret the step we had taken; for our consignees were punctual in their remittances, and all seemed prosperous. The stripped and checked goods of Glasgow had begun slowly to supersede the lackens of Germany; and it became necessary for one of us to go to the emporium of the West to establish a correspondence, as the supply came far short of the demand. I being the single man, and of least use in the warehouse, undertook the journey, at this period one of two days, even by the "Fly," and not unattended with accidents. All being arranged, I proceeded to the Grassmarket, and took my seat in the heavy, lumbering conveyance, which was drawn by six horses—miserable, over-wrought-looking animals. I had walked the distance, a few years before, with more pleasure than I now rode it; for the roads were wretched in the extreme. The weather had, for some days past, been very wet. At times, the poor creatures were wading to their knees in mud, while we, inside, were jolted to the verge of dislocation. Long after dark, on the evening of the first day, we reached Falkirk, to tarry for the night, both horses and passengers equally fatigued; and, to be short with what may not interest you, the shades of evening were falling fast when we lazily drove into the Gallowgate of Glasgow, heartily rejoiced that our conveyance had withstood the tear and wear of the journey.

I had arranged my business satisfactorily, and was turning over in my mind whether I should walk or take the same conveyance back—I had been advised to return on horseback, but this I would not think of, as I never had been on horseback in my life—I had almost resolved to walk, when, upon my return to the inn where I had put up, I met a stranger who had just arrived from America. I thought I had seen his face at some former period. He had recognised me upon my entering, and, rising, accosted me.

"I beg pardon for the freedom," said he; "but is not your name John Square?"

"It is," I replied. "I should know you, too; but I cannot name you so readily, or say when or where I had the pleasure of seeing you."

"Have you forgot Duncan Urquhart?" replied he. "We sailed to America in the Betsy together."

My heart warmed to him in a moment. Many little kindnesses had passed between us, which had lightened the miseries of that voyage. The evening went off with satisfaction to both of us; and, the more so, as he said he was going to Edinburgh, on his way to Aberdeen, on a visit to his relations; for he was now a wealthy man, and rejoiced that he had gone out to America. The time was spent, until we retired to rest, in relating my adventures to him; and, as we had agreed to return in the fly, his were deferred until we were on our way back to Edinburgh. Next morning saw me seated in the torturing machine, listening, in the best manner I could, to the following narrative:—

"My fortune in America," said Urquhart, "was much better than yours. After a period of suffering, you will recollect that I was among the first that were purchased and taken ashore; for this I was indebted to the cunning of my kidknapper. My father being a blacksmith, I had, from my earliest recollection, been forced to assist him; but, being of a playful turn, I learned little of the business. What was worse for my progress, I detested the trade, and longed only for adventure. I embraced, without hesitation, the offer of a free passage, as it was called, and believed all the falsehoods that were told me. I was entered on his roll as a run-away blacksmith's apprentice. I was purchased by a blacksmith who resided about thirty miles from Baltimore, at a village lately erected, and filling very fast. With him I remained for five years, overwrought but well-fed. He was of a morose and passionate turn; and, for the first few months, did not scruple to use the whip, when I at any time displeased him. But I grew apace; and, with it, my confidence in my physical powers. I had also, partly from fear, partly from necessity, become a tolerable tradesman. I do not believe I could have remained, had it not been for the kindness of his wife—a young woman from my native town—who did all in her power to render my slavery easy, without creating jealousy in her morose husband. He was of English extraction, but born in the country; had a good farm, and was said to be rich. He was always bullying and talking, as if he had been afraid that without that omen his importance would fall or diminish. In spite of my endeavours, my blood had, for some time, begun to rise at his harsh treatment—frequently eyeing him from head to foot, and weighing, in my mind, what chance I might have at a fair turn-up with him. Had I run away and been caught, I was liable to the punishment awarded by the laws of the colony, and increased ill-treatment to boot; but, by choosing my time, and giving him a sound thrashing, I had nothing to fear if I came off conqueror. Even the young men, our neighbours, would have laughed at it as a good joke. I was a white man, and free as soon as I had accomplished my term of engagement: had I been a negro, I might have been hanged, if my master chose, for lifting my hand to a white man.

"I had not yet screwed my courage to the assailing point. He was a tall, long-armed, sallow-complexioned man, about forty years of age. I was, as you see, rather short in stature, scarce nineteen, but well-set, and active as a squirrel. Matters were in this position, when, by some means I do not recollect, he was in a worse humour than I had ever found him before, the whole of which he was pouring forth on me. My Scottish blood took fire. All ideas of consequences fled from my mind. I stood boldly forth, and told him I would not run away, neither would I submit longer to his bad temper. His pale face flushed, then became, if possible, more pale from rage, as he eyed me with a look of fierce disdain, under which I quailed not in the least. Astonishment began to mingle with his passion, and thus we stood, face to face, for the space of a minute or two. Fortunately we were at a small distance from the workshop, where we were examining a waggon which had come to be repaired, otherwise there might have been murder committed; for, in the state he was in, he would not have scrupled to have hit me with any tool that came to his hand. He attempted to speak, but fury choked his utterance. He rushed upon me like a mad bull. I was on my guard, and tripped him up so that he fell heavily against some wood; yet only a little stunned. This gained me a decided advantage, as he rose from the ground, more on his guard, but, if it could be, more enraged.

"'This is my day of reckoning for all your bad usage, said I. 'If you prove the better man, I must submit; but it shall not be while I can stand on my feet.'

"'I'll beat the life out of your Scotch body,' he said, as we closed again.

"This struggle was long and severe. Many heavy blows were exchanged, and we bore severe marks of the contest. He had greatly the advantage in length of arm and hardness of muscle; I in wind and agility. Breathless, and as if by mutual consent, for a few minutes, we leant upon the waggon, glaring looks of defiance upon each other. We had struggled in silence—no cry or execration had escaped either of us. We both panted, but attempted not to speak. Again we approached each other with mutual caution, and I saw my only hope was to get, if possible, within his long arms, by closing and rushing back, to avoid being caught and thrown. Gradually I found his blows tell less heavily. My hopes revived. I redoubled my efforts. With a desperate effort he caught me in his arms ere I could get back, and attempted to raise me from the ground. I felt myself almost overpowered.

"'America for ever!' he cried, as I bent beneath his grasp.

"The words acted like electricity upon my mind; every nerve redoubled its energy, and, by one desperate effort, I threw him.

"'Scotland for ever!' I cried, as he lay senseless upon the green turf; and I, gasping for breath and ready to drop from fatigue and bruises, stood over him.

"I became alarmed for his life, and walked as fast as I could to the workshop for water. After quenching my thirst, I brought, to the scene of our strife, a jar; and, after bathing his face, I had the pleasure to see him revive. He felt astonished to see me beside him, and find the care I had taken to revive him. After a few minutes' silence—

"'Duncan,' said he, 'I bear no malice—it was a fair fight, and you have won it. Give me your hand. All I request is that you will not boast of it.'

"I gave him my hand, and said that I would never mention it; that I was sorry for what had happened, and hoped that he would give me no more ill-usage. Well, I supported him home, and put him to bed. His wife, who had been from home on a visit, was astonished, at her return, to see our battered condition. What he told her I know not. She put no questions to me, and I never spoke of it for my own sake; but from that day until the day of his death—which happened two years afterwards—we lived together on the best of terms. I completed my engagement, and wrought with him until he fell a victim to the yellow fever; whereupon Duncan Urquhart became the name over the workshop door, and my countrywoman is Mrs Urquhart, who did not think the worse of me for thrashing her first mate. She had had no children by him, and all is ours. I am now on my way to my native city, to carry back my father, who is not yet a very old man, and my two brothers, both excellent smiths. They are quite happy at the thought, and I have a house ready for them as soon as they arrive. Thus, you see, although I have had, as all emigrants must expect, my winter first, I have now my summer, as you also have, but with this advantage over me, that your sun shines on you in your native city."

Thus in friendly discourse we beguiled our fatiguing journey until we reached Edinburgh late in the evening. The few days that my old brother Palantine remained in the city, before he could procure a passage in a vessel for Aberdeen, he remained with us; for my partner and I still lived in family under the same roof, and a happier circle never lived within the walls of Edinburgh. I esteemed, or rather loved Helen as much as her own husband, and my love was pure, holy, and apart from selfishness; for, had I thought her capable of one improper word or action, my dream of bliss would have been scared for ever. Thus eleven months of unmingled happiness rolled swiftly past, Helen looking now every day for a pledge of their mutual love, and her happy husband joining in her hope and anxiety. Our mutual friend, Mr Sandilands, had several times urged my partner the propriety of some arrangement being made between Helen and him, either a last will or a postnuptial contract; but he would scarcely hear of it, always putting it off until some future period; and when Helen's time drew near, he urged, certainly with more propriety, the danger of a step that might sink her spirits, and produce fatal effects.

At length the eventful day came, that day of anguish and sorrow, which turned the house of joy into one of lamentation and mourning. (Excuse these tears, for they will yet flow at mention of that day of bitterness and despair.) We had dined in our usual, quiet, happy manner, Helen being in her usual spirits, and never having appeared to me more interesting; and we had again opened the warehouse, when the girl came down, and whispered something in the ear of my partner, who, immediately taking his hat, told me that Helen was unwell, and wished to see him. We exchanged smiles as he went out. "I wish her a lucky moment," said I. "Am I right?" "I believe so," he replied. In the course of half an hour he returned. "Square," he said, "I am so anxious and uneasy, I cannot remain. I must be as near her as I am allowed." "To be sure," I replied. "God grant it may be got over!" I was little less agitated than he, and sat at the desk scarcely capable of thought, expecting every moment the parent's joyful greeting. None came. I shut up, and sent our lad home with the keys, and to say I would not be home for an hour or two; about eleven I returned, and found no change. Poor Pettie was in great agitation; the night passed—neither of us thought of rest; about six in the morning, a tap at our door made our hearts leap for joy, only to be more depressed—no change had as yet taken place; her attendant told us not to be alarmed; that she hoped there was no danger; but that she required aid, and requesting us to get it as speedily as possible. James sunk upon his seat, and wrung his hands, unable to speak. Never was a look of anguish more eloquent than his. The cold, formal, business tone of the unmoved attendant chilled our hearts. I ran in all haste for the best aid Edinburgh could afford. Enough. In the afternoon of that day, as I sat in a situation of the most painful suspense, a message came from the house that all was over, and to shut the warehouse. What followed I need not recapitulate. Thus was this happy union most cruelly dissolved; and fatal were the effects that followed.

With Helen finished our prosperity; the warehouse never was opened again in our name. Although almost as much distressed as my partner, I took the charge of the preparation for the funeral, and moved about, more like an automaton than a human being, doing all in my power to administer that consolation I required myself. I felt that all was darkness and gloom, the sun of our happiness had set, and set for ever. While my voice faltered with emotion, I attempted to clear the despondency of James; but, in spite of my efforts, our tears mingled together over the lifeless remains of her we both mourned. The day of the burial came. Scarcely conscious of anything but our privation, we attended more dead than alive. Would, for the sake of outraged humanity, I had left Edinburgh, when I consigned the loved remains of Helen Gray to that churchyard, and not returned home! You have seen me sit upon that rock for hours, my eyes fixed upon that spot there; within a few feet of the historian's tomb, sleeps all that remains of that beloved creature—dear to me is that sad spot—it is, indeed, my only sad solace to gaze upon it, and wish I were laid by the sides of those I loved so well.

(A pause ensued, which I felt it would be profanity to interrupt. At length he resumed:)—

When we returned to our now desolate abode, in hopes of "enjoying our grief" undisturbed, there we found Helen's father and mother, two sisters, and a son-in-law, a writer's clerk. There were also the father and mother of James, sitting apart from them in sad silence, while a whispering conversation passed between Helen's relatives. As soon as I supported James, more dead than alive, into the room, a hollow murmur of condolence fell upon my ear, like the sound of a distant wave. I bowed, and sat down by the side of my friend; a painful pause of a few minutes ensued, when the fraction of the law, the clerk, attempted to speak, after hemming once or twice affectedly:—

"Mr James Pettie," he said, "(hem)—I am sorry to trouble you at present—(hem)—but it is necessary for me to do so, as the relation by law—(hem)—I mean the husband of Grace Gray—(hem)—the sister of the deceased. Please, sir, has Helen Gray, your late spouse—(hem)—left any will or settlement of her affairs?—(hem.")

"Not, sir, that I know of!" groaned the bereaved husband, whose thoughts were, at the time, alone engrossed by the irreparable loss of Helen; riches, and the affairs of this world, being alike far absent from his tortured mind.

I had shrunk from the scowl of my tyrant and unfeeling taskmaster when a betrayed Palantine; I had quailed under the cannibal gaze of the famished and ferocious planter, who thirsted for my life to appease his hunger; but there was one mood of the human mind still awanting to shew me what the human eye was capable of expressing, as the half-choked answer of my heart-stricken partner fell on the ear of the clerk. His small, grey eye shot forth a beam of greedy exultation and delight, more hateful to my soul than any expression of the human mind I had ever witnessed, There was a demoniac glare in it, as if it expressed malice, triumph, and self-importance, while a smile played round his mouth.

"Well, Mr Pettie," he said, "I hope you will be enabled to count and reckon for my sister-in-law's fortune—(hem.")

I had no conception, at the time, of the fatal import of his words; yet I could not endure the viper; and, starting to my feet—

"Sir!" I cried, "if you had the feelings of a man, you would not break this bruised reed. You, the parents of the departed, who ought to bring consolation—can you, with composure, sit and see the bleeding heart of your son-in-law further tortured?"

They spoke not. A look of deprecation—not of reproach—was cast upon their legal relative; and, taking their leave, they left the house. As soon as I ceased to speak, the cold, mercenary creature rose; and, saying, "Perhaps you would prefer to do the business by writing," followed his friends. Relieved by the absence of the avaricious and unfeeling Grays, the parents of James wept over their disconsolate son, reduced by grief to the weakness of childhood. Alarmed by what the writer had said, I wrote a note to Mr Sandilands, requesting his presence in the forenoon, and then sank into a fit of melancholy musing over the vicissitudes I had already experienced in a life so short, and yet little dreaming of the ruin that was at this moment hanging over me.

Prompt in business as upright and humane, Mr Sandilands was with us by ten of the clock. With difficulty, I got James to be present at the interview. His mind had completely sunk under his affliction; and he sat listlessly leaning his head upon the table while the interview lasted. I told him what had passed at our return from the funeral. He shook his head.

"It is most unfortunate for you, my friends," he said, 'that Mr Pettie did not follow my advice in getting written out, and properly executed, either the one or the other of the settlements, in the event of death, that I so often talked of. But it is past all remedy now; so we must refer no longer to it. You, I am sorry to say, are completely in the power of the Grays; and Crooks, their son-in-law, is one who will make no compromise less than the uttermost farthing. We must overhaul your books, and see how your affairs stand. I know they have been most prosperous since before my friend's marriage; but I fear you could not stand such a withdrawal of capital as will now be made."

"We could not," rejoined my partner; "it would be utter ruin, and plunge us into difficulties we never could surmount. As for myself, I care not. I shall not long survive my Helen. But I have brought Mr Square to ruin." Once more he sank into silence; nor could we rouse him again during the interview.

Mr Sandilands and I looked over the books. There was, of a deposit account in the bank, four hundred and fifty pounds, and outstanding debts, in America and at home, to double that amount—besides our stock in trade. There was against us nearly six hundred pounds—leaving us, had Helen lived, or left a settlement in her husband's favour, a clear balance of about fourteen hundred pounds; but, having died within the year and day, all returned to her friends—even her body clothes. What Helen had been left by her first husband could not be concealed. His will was registered. The sum was fifteen hundred pounds clear, after deducting some legacies, and two properties in Morrison's Close. What our agent dreaded was, that Crooks would not compromise; but would, if we did not pay down the whole amount to the uttermost farthing, raise an action to obtain it; and, in the meantime, sequestrate our whole estate. Thus, ruin was inevitable. Meanwhile, Mr Sandilands desired me to draw immediately upon the bank, to be provided for the worst—nothing being to be done without money. I immediately wrote a check for two hundred aud fifty pounds—Mr Sandilands remaining until my return. I walked over to the bank—it was about eleven o'clock—and presented my draft. The teller, without opening it, leaned over the counter—

"Mr Square," he whispered, "I am sorry to inform you that we cannot cash this order; an arrestment was put into our hands, before the bank opened this morning, at the instance of Crooks and Gray."

I thanked him for the civil manner in which he had imparted this stunning intelligence. In a state of mind bordering upon stupor, I returned to the house. Mr Sandilands was busy reading some papers I had not seen before.

"Gentlemen, this is sharp practice," he said; "a summons of count and reckoning, and every form and step followed to insure success, and harass. Crooks means to have a good share of the spoil in law expenses. I hope you have got the cash." My looks told my want of success.

"Oh, I feared as much. Fool that I was, not to advise you to lift it the day after poor Helen's death! But it can't be helped. The game is up with you both, poor young men!" he said in bitterness, and remained sunk in thought a few minutes. "No, I can do nothing to retrieve your affairs. The law of the case is clear and distinct. Summonses and arrestments will now fall thick upon your devoted heads. You have but the choice of two evils—the Canongate jail, or the Sanctuary. I would advise the Abbey; or the other will be forced upon you. Perhaps a compromise may be made; at all events, your persons will be secure. But money must be got by some means or other. Yet how, I cannot at this present moment think; and sure the Abbey is no place for moneyless debtors."

Our difficulties had come so unexpectedly upon us, I was quite bewildered, and heard the good man without being able to reply or give an opinion. My partner only sighed

heavily. Preparatory to our removal to the Sanctuary, I was giving the titles, and placing our papers in separate parcels, when I came to the bond that Helen had given to him for the two hundred and fifty pounds advanced before her marriage; when I mentioned it, he started to his feet, and, snatching it from my hand with an exclamation of pleasure—

"My friends," he said, "I wish you joy; this is fortunate. The bond is drawn out, as desired, in my name, signed by Helen Gray, as cautioner for its faithful fulfilment. The obligation was no doubt discharged; the money I advanced from her own fortune, and gave up the bond as part of her cash when her affairs were finally settled. I abhor and detest a fraudulent transaction as much as any man; but, in a wholesale pillage such as this, by the greedy friends of her whose spirit, could she witness it, would mourn, I think I am justified to myself in doing for the behoof of the oppressed what I am resolved to do, with your consent and promise not to gainsay or expose. I may lose all; the danger is on my side; yet I have no objection to encounter it if you give your consent." We both looked on in astonishment.

"What service can the bond be to us in our present situation?" said I.

"Only to the amount of two hundred and fifty pounds," he replied, "if my advice is followed. It will be more than sufficient to keep you comfortable until you know the worst, which, I fear, will be bad enough. Give me the bond into my possession, and I will advance the money to the full amount, for your use, and make Crooks refund me every farthing. This day I will secure in the hands of the bank the full amount of it. The heirs of Helen Gray are my paymasters. I only regret it was not for double the sum." Without much scruple we both agreed under our present circumstances; as for poor Pettie, he was passive as an infant. To this hour I do not regret this transaction, no doubt fraudulent in the strict eye of the law; but, in many cases, and this is one of the many, the law is cruel.

More through the kindness of our friend than any exertion on my part, we were comfortably situated in Mrs Macgilvray's lodgings, within the Abbey Strand. All our wearing apparel and necessaries had been sent before us; the warehouse keys and house were left in charge of our female servant; everything was under arrestment by the vigilant Crooks before nightfall, and we as effectually deprived of all we possessed as if it had never been ours. Mr Sandilands, who knew and pitied our situation, dined with us; but, in spite of all his efforts, it was a melancholy dinner. This is another point of interest, and a melancholy one. I can contemplate here from my favourate seat the scene of that meeting, and every incident arises to my mind with a species of melancholy pleasure. I want words to describe the broken-hearted Pettie, and the lively, benevolent Sandilands; but here I often hold sweet converse with their spirits. My first musings in general commence below Priestfield, at the east end of the Duke's Walk, where I first met Captain H——, and ends in thoughts of heaven, at Helen's grave. I am now old and childish, or I would not revert to such sad topics. But to return to my narrative, if you still listen unwearied.

(Wiping a few drops of unbidden moisture from my eyes, I beseeched him to proceed. We interchanged a look that words cannot express; a warm grasp of the hand followed, and we moved from the spot, a few steps round the hill, in silence.)

Well, I am in trim again. I slept the first night in durance as soundly as ever I had slept in my life, and awoke, as was my wont, early. I looked to Pettie; he was in a troubled sleep; fearful of awakening him, I looked upon his pale and interesting face; the vision that occupied his troubled mind flitted over it. I could not remove my eyes from him. A melancholy smile played upon his features for a time; his lips moved; a scarce audible murmur issued forth. Gradually the expression changed, and sadness took its place, while big tears stole from his eyelids, accompanied with stifled sobs. I could look no longer, but quietly dressed myself, and walked out, with a sadness upon me more dull and benumbing than I had ever felt. For myself I cared not one straw; had it not been for Pettie, I had once more bid farewell to Edinburgh, though not perhaps with so light a heart as I had done before, and sought my fortune in a more fortunate soil. I was now sick and weary of it. A firm conviction took possession of my mind, as I wandered round the brow of Salisbury Crags, that it was a city in which I could not prosper; yet, as I looked, I could not but love it and wish it prosperity. With a firm determination to take farewell of James, and fly from all my present troubles, I returned to breakfast. He was still in bed, his aged mother weeping by his side. I spoke cheerfully to him, but he turned away his head, and groaned aloud. Vain were our persuasions; he refused to rise; life had become a burden to him. For hours he would remain in obdurate silence, and then break forth into fruitless wailings and complaints. Alas! his mind was completely gone, and nature was sinking fast. The best medical advice was called; his malady was beyond the reach of art; a few weeks of suffering removed him to where all his affections had been since Helen's death. I laid him by her side, and stood once more in the world, a lonely individual. Mr Sandilands was present at the funeral. I returned not to the Sanctuary, but went with him to dinner. He told me that Crooks and the creditors had gone to law about the effects; and I might return a rich man before the law plea was decided. The whole of the creditors pity you and your late partner; the whole of their animosity is directed against Crooks, for the manner in which he crushed you, and refused the liberal terms of compromise I offered him. Happen what will to the greedy and merciless family, I wish you to leave Auld Reeky on honourable terms. Make over to your creditors every claim to the estate, return to the Sanctuary for a few days, and I will procure you a free discharge from every one of them. To this I cheerfully agreed, and the good man fulfilled all he had promised.

Anxiously I awaited the day of my departure, which at length came. Of the bond for two hundred and fifty pounds, we had only drawn fifty from him. I knew, from what he had mentioned about the law plea, that it would be long before he could realise that sum from Crooks, although it was safe, and bearing interest in the hands of the bankers. I had made up my mind not to accept the balance of two hundred pounds from him until he had recovered it in the course of law, for Crooks dared as little lift the cash as the creditors.

When I called to take my final leave of him, and settle for the trouble he had been at on our account, he told me he had no account against us, but was two hundred pounds in my debt. This I would upon no account yield to, and, after almost coming to a quarrel, we compromised. I accepted one hundred, and he kept the other at my credit, until I should call, or send an order for it. Of this hundred, I gave fifty to the aged parents of James Pettie, and once more set out upon the world with sixty pounds in my pocket.

WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

CALEB CRABBIN.

As a good theorizing spirit in philosophy is the very soul of all progress in science, and the creatures that dabble in experiments with crucibles and retorts are no better than pioneers to the great geniuses that combine and generalize, so some think it an undoubted truth that speculation is the great spirit of commerce, (including, of course, in the articles of that commerce, *wives*,) and that those who do not make a bold stroke seldom make an effectual one. In no department of commerce is speculation held of greater importance than in that of marriage; and how rare is it to find a man who thoroughly understands it—if, indeed, it may not be said that ninety-nine out of a hundred do not know even the difference between buying and selling. The women marriage-traders, to be sure, form a very creditable exception, because every one of them—knowing very well, for a surety, that they have on hand a stock that does not improve by keeping—are sellers, out and out; while the males again are almost all buyers, though, if they had the sense of a tortoise, they might know that they have just as good a stock to dispose of as their fair customers. There are, doubtless, some exceptions in our sex that go far to retrieve our characters; but, alas! they are very few; and it is just on that very account that we think it proper to give some account of Mr Caleb Crabbin, hosier in the Lawnmarket in Edinburgh—so great a genius in the department to which we have alluded, that he discovered that all mongering in blankets and stockings was a perfect bagatelle in comparison of the profitable disposal of his own person; and no sooner did he make the discovery than he acted upon it, with all the boldness that belongs to original thinkers.

The worthy we have just mentioned favourably—because we admire a supporter of the rights of free trade—had laboured for a period of six or eight years in disposing of articles of hosiery, for every one of which he paid a high price; and whether it was that he could not buy to advantage—his genius probably not lying in that way—or that he could not sell with a profit, wherein he displayed the same want of natural tact, it is certain that he became a bankrupt about as soon as other people merely began to see they might make "a good thing" of a stop. So he wound up cleverly, and made just as little of his bankruptcy—a matter of profit often to those who are mere bunglers in the department of solvency—and took it into his head to sell himself. So, accordingly, as chance would have it, he threw his eyes on Miss Belinda Yellowlees, who combined the two comely properties of wealth and weakness—in other words, she possessed a thousand pounds and a very bad constitution; and here it was that Caleb's properties began to be manifested; for the man who thought himself not worth one farthing—and was, in fact, not worth more, in the estimation of any of his own sex—was proved to be worth no less than a thousand pounds, at which price Miss Yellowlees bought him, and thought, too, that she had got a very good bargain. Seldom, indeed, it happens that both buyer and seller, in a transaction of pure business concerns, think that they have made a hit; yet, of a surety, it was the case in this marriage; for Mr Caleb Crabbin actually conceived that he had made as good a bargain as did Miss Belinda Yellowlees; and so, to be sure, it was soon proved, by an exceeding good probatory test; for Miss Belinda, within six months, went the way of the dead, and her thousand pounds went the way of the living—that is, into the possession of her surviving husband.

No one will deny that this was undoubtedly a good beginning in this new commercial enterprise of Mr Caleb; and the best feature of the whole transaction was, that, along with the thousand pounds, he had actually got back again the commodity which he gave for it, and was thereby in a capacity to dispose of it again, on far better terms than ever. Many a good article of hosiery he had disposed of over the counter, and never seen a single glimpse again either of the price or the article; whereas, here, there was all the difference in the world; for he held the possession of both—the thing sold, and the price got for it; and, stimulated by his success, he, as soon as decency would permit, set about again endeavouring to make a bargain, upon the same or better terms than before. Nor was he long about encompassing his object; for the money he had got by the first transaction yielded a facility to the progress of the second; and, within a year of the death of the first unfortunate Mrs Belinda Crabbin, he, after a hunt comprehending nearly all that period, found out an individual not only in every way worthy of his attention, but exhibiting all the features of being as good a market-woman as he was an out-and-out trader. The lady, whose name was Miss Amelia Reddie—clearly an orthographic phase of the cognomen Ready—was eager, or "yape," as the Scotch call it, for a transaction; and having nothing to boast of but her patrimony of twelve hundred and fifty, she made the most of what she had; and the never a man of all she had ever spoken to but knew, as well as he did the number of his own fingers, the exact sum, to the odd fifty, which she was willing to give as the consideration. Many a dozen of suitors had heard her set forth her mercantile recommendation; but then, she was the last of five, who had all died of consumption, leaving her the heir of the small sums that belonged to them; and this fact, which she tried assiduously to conceal, had in a great measure destroyed her saleable capability, till the time when there sppeared in the mart Mr. Caleb, who, instead of deeming it an objection, thought it the consideration next best to the amount of her funds. Well, without exhausting a lexicon upon the affair, we come to the point, as cleverly as did the hero himself, who was, in the thirteenth month after the death of his first wife, duly and lawfully put in possession of Miss Amelia Reddie and her twelve hundred and fifty. "A deuced deal better than hosiery this!" said Caleb to himself on his marriage night; "for here have I not made two thousand two hundred and fifty pounds in one year and a month, without ever a shop, or sign-board, or risk, or trouble at all."

If we were to say that there was an atom of affection in a concern of this kind, we would, assuredly, be doing not only Mr. Caleb a great injustice, but be committing a libel on the taste of our sex; and to be sure, save for the money,

there was none at all. But we have more to say; and that is, that, where a man does not love the woman (as why should he?) whom he has married for money, it follows, as a natural corollary, that he wishes her dead. With "a trembling hand," like that of the poet Tibullus, he would hold the fair one, when dying; but, then, the hand would tremble lest she should recover, not lest she should go the way of all flesh. But, alas for the plans of mortals!—the greatest geniuses sometimes fail in noble undertakings; and, not long after Mr Crabbin had begun to discover ailing symptoms on the part of his helpmate, the truth broke upon him that he was about to become a father; and a father, too, in good time, he became, of as healthy a child as ever blessed a living husband who liked his wife.

"If I am to have half-a-dozen, or, mayhap a dozen, of these," said he, "the devil a merchant that ever sold cheaper than he bought, ever made so bad a bargain. Every one of these creatures will cost, at least, three hundred pounds; so that, if I shall have six of them, I will be a loser to the extent of five hundred and fifty."

The speech was prophetic; for every year, for a period of six, the consumptive Mrs Amelia Crabbin presented her husband with a healthy pledge; and on every birthday Mr Caleb made a speech almost the same, but with increased lugubrity. But for this he might have found very good authority among the ancients; and if he had known the name of him who wept at the birth of a child, or of Xenophon, who continued the job of a sacrifice he was at, though a messenger told him of the death of his boy, he would have thought them very sensible men, of a very different kidney from the fool, John Zopilah, who died of joy when he heard that his wife had brought him an heir male. But it availed Mr Caleb nothing.

"Better," said he, "I had stuck by the counter; for I might have become bankrupt as often as I chose; and, if I had made the never a penny by it, I might at least have got quit of my creditors; but children are a sort of creditors that a man cannot sweep off by any means, not even the famous cessio."

And what made the matter more intolerable was, that all this time, when Mrs Crabbin was thriving so excellently well, in the way of adding to the number of the human species, she was gradually declining in health, having, by the time she had the third child, become so lean and shrivelled, that neither the Atlas nor the Hercules would have insured her life at a premium of fifty per cent. Yet, as we have said, three more followed in good time, and healthier creatures never opened their eyes on an evil world. Mrs Amelia Crabbin had now, however, done her worst; and, having been wasted away to a mere sigh, she, one night, took Mr Caleb round the neck, and, weeping bitterly, told him she was going, in the midst of her prosperity, to where she once thought she would have gone six years before—even where her five sisters were—the grave—recommending to him to take care of the twelve hundred and fifty, for the sake of the six children she had left, as every penny of it, and more, would be needed by the dear orphans. Mr Caleb wept too; but it was at the touching allusion she had made to the danger she had escaped, of dying before the first of the children was born; and Mrs Amelia, seeing what she conceived to be undoubted evidence of his affection, hung a while upon his neck, and then bid him bring in every one of the six. They were accordingly ranged by the side of her bed.

"Now, my little ones," she said to them, tenderly, "Caleb, Andrew, Maria, George, Amelia, and Augustus, your mother is going to die, and you may never see her again after this hour. Mr Crabbin," she continued, looking to her husband, "you must know that these children are the last of the blood of our Reddies, and proud am I to think that it has pleased heaven that I should be the means of thus leaving so many scions of our ancient race, that there is no chance of the name being forgotten, seeing that they have all three names, the middle one being Reddie in every instance. I hope they will multiply as I have done. Bless you, my dear children! Your father will protect you; and thankful am I that the twelve hundred and fifty is yet all left, so that you will get your shares when you come to be of age."

In an hour afterwards Mrs Amelia Crabbin was no more, and in three days afterwards she was buried.

"It is finished," said the husband; "and a fair speculation never turned up an uglier balance, since the days of the bubble of the South Sea."

So he took to real weeping; and there was not a friend that came to give him consolation, but went away with the impression that he had been one of the most loving of husbands, and was one of the tenderest of men. Among those visiters, were two or three acquaintances of his deceased wife, and one or two of them possessed even more than twelve hundred and fifty. So, Mr Caleb, seeing through his wet eyes that his grief took with them very well, continued the indications—a very easy process, seeing he had only to look to the debit and credit of his speculation to make the tears drop as fast as hailstones.

"It's a heavy loss you have sustained, Mr Crabbin," said Miss Jean Gibbs.

"Very heavy loss," rejoined he, with emphasis on the principal word.

"But the children are a consolation."

"To be sure they are," answered Caleb; "and I have six of them, and now, you see, all without a female to take charge of them."

The hint did not take, as the saying goes; and Miss Jean having departed, and Miss Isabella Gentle, who had also a competency, having arrived, he tried the same plan with her; for his spirit for speculation was still strong; and he expected, yet, to make a far more successful hit than he had even done in the case of Miss Belinda Yellowlees. Now, Miss Isabella was just as sincere in her admiration of his sorrow as was Miss Jean Gibbs; and all that was gone over about the loss he had sustained, and the consolation of the children, and the feeling he exhibited, as became a good husband and a loving father. But the moment he made a hint about the poor creatures having no female to look after them, the same effect was as evident as in the case of Miss Jean—for Miss Isabella, for a certainty, did not seem to relish it.

"All this may come of my being too eager and too soon," said he. "But I fear these six children will be stumbling-blocks in the way of my farther enterprise; for a woman will not give so much for a man with six children, as she would do for himself. Had my second transaction come up to the first, I might to-day have been an independent man. But a third may do better; and, if it don't, it shall not, by Hymen, be Mr Caleb Crabbin that will be to blame."

Nor, indeed, could it be alleged that he spoke falsely; for, as soon as the proper time came, he set about a very vigorous search for a third helpmate in every direction where he thought he had any chance. He tried, again, Miss Jean Gibbs, and Miss Isabella Gentle; but the children formed an objection which they could not get over.

"I will never marry a man with six children—no—nor five, nor four, nor three, nor two," said Miss Jean.

"I would far rather live and die an old maid, than become the slave of another woman's family," was the reply of Miss Isabella.

And then he tried Miss Julia Cross, who had something of a lying stock, though not much, and her answer was just as peremptory.

"I hold the woman to be mad, Mr Caleb Crabbin," said

she, "who would undertake the charge of six children. One might as well become a schoolmistress at once."

And after this rebuff, he tried Miss Angelina Crabbe, who had an annuity of somewhere about seventy-five pounds, besides about three hundred of old savings; but Angelina said that she would not be a stepmother for the whole earth.

"I see it will not do," said he, after some farther rejections. "Unless I take a wife with nothing, I will never get another, where it is known that I am burdened with six children. But he who takes a wife with nothing is but a sorry trafficker; and the never a wife with nothing, were she as fair as Venus, will Caleb Crabbin marry in this world. I will pack off the whole crew, and try my fortune under other colours."

The resolution thus formed he put in execution, by getting the whole of his children boarded with friends who lived at a distance, upon the pretence that he was going to take a trip away somewhere abroad. Having achieved this preliminary, he set off for the nearest good watering place, being no other than the noted Pitkaithly, where so many "wanters" have, with various success, been supplied; and he had not been a week there when he fell in with a buxom widow of five-and-thirty, who was reported as being worth not a jot less than one hundred and fifty pounds a-year, secured on the strong Atlas, by the providence of her deceased husband. The name she carried, Mrs Jemima Bowsie, was a mixture of her own maiden name and the surname of her husband, very well blended; and she carried herself with such an air of frankness, surrounded with the eclat of her fortune, which she had taken care to blaze pretty well, that Mr Caleb Crabbin was immediately struck.

"That is my mark," said he, "as sure as was Belinda Yellowlees; and, if I'm not worth the purchase at one hundred and fifty pounds per annum, on the life of Mrs Jemima Bowsie, I have lost all my saleable commodity."

One who had twice sold himself, and offered himself for sale a score of times over, had no difficulty in getting matters placed in a train for a new offer; and an hour had scarcely elapsed after the monologue we have mentioned, when Mr Caleb Crabbin and Mrs Jemima Bowsie were walking and talking together as if they had been acquainted from the period of conning the alphabet. Nor was their intimacy long limited to talking a-field; for he found his way to the house where she lodged, and she found her way to the house where he had taken up his quarters, and, in the course of these meetings, mutual hints and questions tended towards the expression of mutual wishes.

"By the way, Mr Crabbin," said Mrs Jemima, one evening when they were sitting together in her lodgings, "I have a question to put to you; and, as you respect a widow, left, as it were, alone in the world, you will answer me according to your conscience."

"That will I, Mrs Bowsie," answered Caleb, "as sincerely as if you were my wedded wife."

"That is tenderly and beautifully indited, Mr Crabbin," answered she. "Pray, sir, is the Atlas a strong company?"

"I believe it is a very strong concern, madam," replied he; "not much less so, I fancy, than the Royal, where I happen to have two thousand pounds deposited on an operating account. But might I have the great boldness, madam, to ask you why you put that question to me?"

"I am not sure," replied Mrs Jemima; "yet, let me see. Why, there can't be much harm in it either, only one does not like to trumpet forth their private affairs. But, then, it is to be remembered that I am a lonely creature in the world; and to whom can an unprotected widow speak, if it isn't to one who is just in her own situation?—for you hinted to me that your wife has gone, and left you also solitary."

"Too true," answered Caleb, affecting some ocular moisture. "My house is indeed empty enough. Indeed I have the key of it in my pocket; and one who has the never a one to speak to at home, just wanders about where the fancy lists."

"How our positions and sentiments *do* coincide!" replied she. "Well, as to the reason for my putting the question about the strength of the Atlas; this," she continued, as she opened a box and took out a policy, "this may explain it." And she handed the policy to Mr Caleb Crabbin.

"An annuity policy for one hundred and fifty, for the natural life," said he, as he affected surprise, at what he knew as well as he did the amount of the sums possessed by his two deceased wives. "A handsome thing, madam, of a certainty."

"Very well for two single people," rejoined she, sentimentally; "but believe me, sir, I would not have put the question had it not been that a female is apt to get nervous where her all is laid out on the security of one concern."

"There need be never a tone of apology about the matter, madam; for, to be plain with you, I often make inquiries about the stability of the Royal, where, as I told you, I have two thousand pounds deposited on an operating account; and, to be plainer still, I do not hesitate to tell you, madam, that my house being, as I said, locked up in these gloomy days of my widowhood, I carry about with me my receipt. Here it is." (Opening his pocket-book.) "You may take a glance at it just as I have done at your policy. Giff-gaff, as we say, makes good friends."

"And you have just hit upon the very reason," replied she, "why I carry about my policy with me; for, where there is no one at home to take an interest in one's affairs, or a charge of their effects, one feels uneasy about a valuable document, such as these in our hands. Of course you do not tell any one of the question I put to you; because, you know, the Atlas might come on me for damages."

"No fear on't, madam," said Caleb; "but, pray—hem! hem!—is it your intention, Mrs Bowsie, ever again to change your name?"

"And, pray, Mr Crabbin," replied she, holding away her head, "is it your intention ever to give yours to another woman?"

"The never a doubt on't, madam," rejoined Mr Caleb "Loneliness is poor company; and I would marry to-morrow were it for nothing else than to produce some stir of life in my deserted house."

"And, for society's sake, I would almost be tempted to change condition, too," rejoined she, rising to put past the policy and conceal her blushes.

Unluckily, at this interesting moment, an acquaintance entered, and put an end to a conversation that was clearly tending towards a crisis, to which the boldness of Mr Caleb would soon have brought it. But enough had been said to dream upon; and by the time that the two met next day in the woods, the matter had been arranged in the minds of both. The question was "popped," a gracious answer returned, and, as Caleb had clearly induced her to believe, without any direct statement, that he had not a single child to mar Mrs Jemima's happiness, he saw the necessity of getting the transaction concluded without the loss of a moment of time, lest discoveries might break it up. But the widow was just as anxious for quick dispatches as he was; and he did not fail to take advantage of so favourable a circumstance. So to Perth he went, and got all things put in readiness for a proclamation of

bans. This preliminary was gone through on the following Sunday; on the Monday after, Mr Caleb Crabbin and Mrs Jemima Bowsie were man and wife; and thus had Caleb disposed of himself, for the third time, on terms which he conceived to form the elements of a good bargain.

These matters we have run over rapidly, leaving it, of course, to be understood that several explanations—such as the localities of their locked-up houses, their connections, and so forth, were mutually made and mutually relied on; and it becomes us, in the same manner, to leave to the fancy all the pretty excursions and conversations that lasted for the legitimate period of the sweet moon, at the end of which the couple arrived in Edinburgh to take possession of the husband's deserted house. And, to be sure, the house was empty enough, in so far as regarded human beings; for there was no one in it, and Mrs. Jemima Crabbin surveyed it as her future home, with no small expression of satisfaction. A new servant was got. A week passed, and all was as it should be—not a word of the six children having, as yet, been uttered by Caleb, and no one of the neighbours having taken it upon them to supply the want of knowledge which Caleb conceived to be necessary to a continuation of his happiness. On the eighth day, they went out together, to draw the quarterly annuity from the agent of the Atlas Company; and never was a man better pleased with himself than Caleb, when he pocketed the thirty-seven pounds ten shillings, the first earnest of many drawings, even so long as the life of his helpmate. This was clearly not fated to last; because it behoved Caleb to make the necessary disclosure, to prevent its being made, perhaps in a manner fraught with more pain to her, who apparently looked forward to a life of genteel ease. It was clear that the sooner the disclosure was made the better; and a stronger cup of tea than usual (brewed on the head of the quarter's annuity), having been served up, he sat ruminating on the best way of breaking the intelligence.

"What are you thinking of, Mr. Crabbin?" said the lady, as she sat filling out the first cup of tea, and while the door stood open that the servant might bring in the toast.

"There he is, you little darlings," said Mrs Reddie of Pennicuick, as she entered; and, at the same instant, Master Caleb Reddie Crabbin, Master Andrew Reddie Crabbin, and Miss Maria Reddie Crabbin, rushed forward with a united cry of "Papa, papa, papa!" and hung round his neck, and jumped on his knee, with a demonstration of affection that a father, in ordinary circumstances, would have been delighted to see.

"I couldna keep them awa, sir," said the woman. They would be in, reason or nane."

Mrs Crabbin sat with the teapot in her hand, held nearly as high as her mouth, and contemplated the affectionate scene, with open lips, and wide staring eyes; but never a word had Mr Caleb said, though the dear little ones hugged him more fondly than ever.

"Are these your children, Mr Crabbin?" at last said the wife.

Caleb looked at her, and saw something like a smile playing round the corner of her lips, in the midst of sufficient indications of surprise; but the meaning thereof transcended all his powers of construction.

"The children, you hear, say I'm their father," replied he, still gazing in her face, to try if he could catch again the same symptom he had observed before; and, to be sure, he did catch it, and, with it, another symptom that astonished him more still; for Mrs Crabbin immediately ejaculated—

"Why did you not tell me of this, Mr Crabbin? What nice, dear, sweet creatures! I'm delighted to see them. Come to me, George; come to me, Andrew; and, Maria, you are the prettiest little girl in the world."

"What an amiable wife I have got!" ejaculated he, as he saw her take the little ones and fondle them as kindly as if they had been her own.

"When saw ye the others," said Mrs Reddie—"George, Amelia, and Augustus? Are they weel aneugh?"

"Three more!" ejaculated Mrs Crabbin.

And Caleb again searched her face, to see if there was not some irony lurking about the muscles; but the never a trace could he find but satisfaction. He was puzzled as never man was puzzled since the days of Œdipus.

"Have I been at all these pains," muttered he, "to conceal what yields her pleasure rather than chagrin?"

"Now, Mr. Crabbin," said his wife, as she still fondled the children, "you must send to-morrow for the others, that I may see them; for I long to shew them that I shall be as kind to them as would have been their own mother."

"The never such another woman is to be found in all Christendom!" muttered Caleb.

"Jenny," cried Mrs. Crabbin, "bring cups here, that the children may have their tea."

And so the cups were brought; and the whole group, Mrs. Reddie—whose mouth had been closed up by the effect of the extraordinary scene—included, sat down in the most perfect harmony.

On the very next day, a messenger was sent off for Master George Reddie Crabbin, Miss Amelia Reddie Crabbin, and Master Augustus Reddie Crabbin; and they were expected to arrive at the house of their father within three days afterwards. Meanwhile, Mrs. Crabbin displayed still the same degree of kindness she had at first exhibited; and Caleb continued to wonder more and more at conduct that seemed to set at defiance all the matrimonial maxims he had got pooved to him by the many women he had solicited to become his wife. Nor can there be a doubt that he was pleased—if, indeed, it might not be said that he was delighted; for it cannot be denied that the weight of the secret he had carried about had materially interfered with his connubial happiness; and even the light of the honeymoon had been dashed with streaks of shade, thrown up from the cavern where the dread fact had lain concealed.

On the day on which the additional children were expected, Mrs Crabbin was occupied in making preparations for their home-coming. A thousand little matters were gone about with maternal assiduity; and, everything having been arranged, the couple and the three children sat down to tea, much in the same spirit they had done on the previous occasion. It was about five o'clock; and the coach would arrive somewhere about that time.

"Here they come at last," said Caleb, as he listened to a tread of many steps on the stair, accompanied by the clear clack of the tongues of happy children.

And, to be sure, in they came; but there happened to be no fewer than five, accompanied by an old nurse; and they had no sooner entered, than they ran forward to Mrs Crabbin, crying out "Mamma, mamma, mamma!" all together, and hanging round her neck, and kissing her, and climbing on her knees, just in the same affectionate manner that had been exhibited by Mr Crabbin's children on the prior occasion.

Meanwhile, Mrs Jemima Crabbin was busy with the face of Mr Caleb, to see what she could find there; but the man who never had any great sense of justice, shewed no smile, as she had done when *his* children came so unexpectedly in upon her. A sombre gloom covered his face, and he sat and looked as glum as he did on every occasion when Mrs Amelia Crabbin had brought him a child; and, probably, if there had been any deeper shade, or rather five times as deep as that expression, it would have found a place upon his face.

"Are all these your children, madam?" said Caleb, with a voice that expressed with the question a tendency to choke.

"Yes," answered Mrs Crabbin; "but you see, my dear sir, you beat me; for while I have only five, you have six."

"Eleven of a family to support on two thousand pounds of principal, at four per cent., and one hundred and fifty per annum on the life of Mrs Jemima Crabbin!" groaned Mr Caleb. "A deuced poor trafficker I am proved to be—would I not have been better as a hosier?"

"A hosier!" ejaculated Mrs Crabbin. "I took you for a gentleman, as Mr Frederick Bowsie was, every inch of him."

"And I took you for a solitary widow, as you led me to believe," responded he.

"And so, to be sure, I took you for a solitary widower, carrying the key of your house in your pocket, as you previously told me," was the just reply.

At this juncture the conversation was interrupted by the entrance of the other three Crabbins, who acted over again the scene of their brothers and sister; and thus there were brought on the carpet no fewer than eleven of a family, one half strangers to their half brothers and sisters, and all talking, and laughing, and romping, in a manner that might have afforded no small joy to well-conditioned parents. Yet Mr Caleb was not to be cajoled by their fun into anything like good humour, for no man likes to behold the evidence of the almost total defeat of a darling project, which he had held to be the pride and profit of his existence. Nor was the bringing of eight more tea-cups, instantly ordered by Mrs Crabbin, likely to effect what the romping of the "dear ones" had not been able to accomplish; and it is impossible to say how long he would have remained under the cloud of his gloom, had not Mrs Crabbin risen, and, going round to him by the backs of the circle of children, gently and playfully clapped him on the hanging clouded cheek.

"Come now, Mr Crabbin," said she, "you see we are just in the practice of the pot and kettle, that fell into warfare, calling each other blackamores. You have cheated me and I have cheated you, and, therefore, are we on a par. No good can come of complaining where each has so good a rejoinder; and, to be plain with you, if you gloom, I'll gloom, having just as good a right; whereas, if you are well pleased, and love my five, I shall be well pleased and love your six; and thus we may make the best of a bad bargain. What say you, Mr Caleb Crabbin?"

Caleb threw his eye around the table, and groaned; but necessity is a strong monitor; and so he turned round, where there was a matrimonial kiss awaiting him—and, having taken the offering for better and for worse—

"I believe, Jemima, you are right after all," said he; "but still it is a bad business: for, if we add five or six more children to that small army, we may come to starve."

"You can begin business again as a merchant (but not in the hosiery way) with your two thousand, and I shall be as frugal a wife as ever made the two ends of coming and going out meet."

Caleb meditated.

"You are right again, Jemima," said he; "for after all, I have not been happy under the trade of wiving I have driven for so many years—always idle, and pointed out as one who lives on the means of his wives—so, to be sure, I'll immediately betake myself to an honourable calling, and before I die I may yet acquire the reputation of what is called a respectable member of society. For, true it is," he added, "that a fortune-hunter, even if he has run down the game of thousands, is only a fortune-hunter to the end of the chapter. Out of my evil you see has come my good; and you, who a little ago seemed my bad angel, have turned out to be good. So here be all our strife ended."

And another embrace settled the affair.

"Now," said Caleb, "you'll be kind enough to tell me the names of these children. By my faith, they are pretty ones!—as pretty as my own."

"This is William—this is George—this is Andrew—this is Mary—and this Margaret."

"Well, we must fall upon some way of distinguishing those of mine and those of yours, who carry the same name. Let it be your George and my George, your Andrew and my Andrew. I see now no difficulty about the matter."

"Neither do I," answered Jemima. "All we have to provide against is to avoid calling our own *mutual* children George or Andrew, for a third of the name wouldn't do."

"Neither it would," rejoined he.

According to these arrangements, Mr Crabbin commenced business again; and, having been taught experience by his former failure, did very well. We believe there were at least two or three additional children born afterwards; but that was of no consequence, because Mr Crabbin's means became, by his own industry, proportionate. A good lesson hangeth by the peg of our tale, or we are somewhat out.

MARY IRVING; OR, THE TWO MEETINGS.

In the year 1777, the parents of Mary Irving occupied a sunny-face cottage in a small hamlet called *The Bluthering Syke*, situated within view of the confluence of the rivers Esk and Liddal, on the Scottish Border, and commanding, from its high-perched, roadside elevation, a distant glimpse northward of Gilnockie Tower—a picturesque remnant, still extant, of the favourite domicile and stronghold of the noted Johnnie Armstrong. Had I fiction only to relate, and not a few passages of real life, I might have chosen to confer upon the birthplace of my heroine a more harmonious name. But there could be none more appropriate—unless I were to substitute Bellevue, or Belvidere, from the surpassing beauty of the variegated scenery which its wide range of prospect embraced; and these would be but little in keeping with the humility of the aforesaid clay-built hamlet. The Bluthering Syke then spoke for itself, and still speaks, in the babbling of an adjacent runlet; and, about half-a-mile northwards, near the same roadside, the Boglegite—another cluster of cottages, overlooking a rifted precipice, and pallisadoed round with piky, time-seered pine trees—where dwelt an ancient worthy, whom the "Wizard of the North" would have delighted to honour—equally proclaims the talents of the district for felicitous nomenclature. But the name of each place, at the time of which I speak, had an associated significancy beyond their local descriptiveness. The familiar appellations of Mary Irving's two brothers—who, with herself, were all of a once numerous family who had survived the blights of childhood, were Blethering Saunders and Daft Davy; the latter literally an idiot or *natural*; the former having what we call in Scotland a *mant*, a sullen visage, and a brawling temper; and Kate of the Boglegite, if she were not, as some have affirmed, the actual name-mother of her dwelling-place, might well, in form and feature, have passed for such. Yet the *spirit* of that gaunt, weirdly shape, was a spirit of "gentle bidding," and more than ordinary intelligence. She was, moreover, the depository of a larger collection of legendary lore, brownie and bogle stories, and authentic memorabilia of fairyland than any other wife between the forests of Nicol and Etterick could boast; and, as a crooner of exhaustless ballads, historical, humorous, and pathetic, had no rival in the district, throughout which she was not more famed for her eminence in song and legend than, in her home neighbourhood

beloved for the kind heart, shrewd sense, and merry mother-wit, which, to the last of her long life, rendered this singular-looking original the helper, counsellor, and acceptable ingle-nook guest of every rural roof it contained. By no one was she more loved and untiringly listened to than by her pretty grand-niece, Mary Irving, into whom she had infused the pure spirit of her own romantic vein, and a touch of belief in an inferior supernatural agency, without prejudice to her natural good sense and firm trust in the overruling wisdom of a Higher Power.

The parents of Mary were industrious, God-fearing people—wholly illiterate, save in the reading of their Bible, and of such commentaries upon it as were prescribed by the pastor of the Seceder communion to which they belonged—in the deep mysticisms of which, if frequent dutiful perusal could ensure enlightenment, they might have been accounted deeply learned. But peace and hope had been granted to the prayer of their desiring faith; and, though they professed to set at naught human means in the work of correcting fallen nature, and were, consequently, less vigilant over their children, in some particulars, than the worldly-wise and world-corrupted are wont to be they failed not to set before them—together with certain doctrinal tenets hard to be understood, but which neither teacher nor taught would have deemed it other than sacrilege to dispute reasoning upon—the more prevailing argument of good and holy living. And let none professing to respect the sacred page deride such simple docility, or pronounce such literally child-like faith to be inconsistent with the production and maturing of the best Christian fruits. We walk fearlessly in the midst of mundane mysteries; and reverence, which is the root and nourishment of piety, has seldom been improved by curious searching into the conflicting opinions of men, concerning the deep things of God. It has been well said by the pious Ganganelli, that "man's fall was *at the foot of the tree of knowledge;*" and the further plundering of its branches, has but the more discovered to us the barrenness and insufficiency of our native pretensions towards "solving the mystery of our being;" of which the present duties and the future hopes are made sufficiently plain to us in the precepts and promises of the blessed gospel. Happy are they who, through whatever moral and metaphysical clouds, can, like Mary and her parents, discern the wisdom of piety, and the beauty of holiness. In the society I have described, Mary's early years were nurtured, who was the pride and ornament of her humble home, and the chief solace of its grievances. A daily sufferer from her elder brother's petulant, domineering temper, or the younger's capricious fatuity, she had the soft answer that turneth away wrath, ever ready to disarm the contender; and, better taught than to reply to the poor ignorant one, according to his folly, by love and gentleness she had won the wayward *natural* to a recognising love for her, and docility to her rule, such as he evinced towards no other human being. His wild, unsettled eye would soften into something like his own kindly humanity, to meet her affectionate smile, when she commended him; and a threat of "guid lassie's" displeasure, as he had learned to call her, was commonly a prevailing spell over his most freakish moods. The care of this "helpless, hapless being," was a heavy burden to hard-working parents; and, to lighten it to them, and, prevent an object of terror from becoming an object of dislike in the neighbourhood, Mary employed her ascendancy over him with such assiduous, well-requited watchfulness, and was also so successful in the pacification of her other brother's churlish humours, it was hardly a conscious sacrifice to her to give up entirely, for her home duties, the society and amusements shared by other young persons around her. And thus, within the shade of those clay-built walls, the flowers of her delicate beauty and modesty grew up little noticed, and uncontaminated; and in that rude association, the virtues of fidelity to duty, patience, humility, and self-denial, preparing her to adorn the condition of servitude, for which she was intended, acquired early maturity, by constant and endeared exercise. What character is more honourable than the good and faithful domestic servant—and of that class, styled by a French writer "our natural friends, the victims of our ill humours, the witnesses of our weaknesses, and the sources of our reputation?" Never was there one more deserving to be held in honour than she whose two remarkable, well-authenticated "meetings" with her first and only mistress, I have undertaken to record.

Rosehall, on which the cottage of the Irvings looked down, was, at the date I have mentioned, the only mansion, in the parish of C——, having any pretensions to the character of a gentleman's seat. In its comparative architectural stateliness, and with its trim front lawn, and picturesque shrubberies, sloping along the windings of the romantic Esk, it had lain before Mary's eyes from her first dawn of observation, a vision of "glory and of beauty," in her estimation, scarcely to be surpassed by the notions she had formed of fairy palaces, or of the scriptural magnificence of Babylon the renowned. Its proprietors, whom I will call Mr and Mrs Douglas, were persons of good fortune and profuse expenditure, whose habits of self-indulgence had not quite hardened them to the distresses of the poor; and whose urbanity and easy good-nature gave a winning character of benevolence to their facilely-granted charities, which would not, perhaps, have stood the test of the analyzing crucible, but which shone out like pure gold in the eyes of the supplicants it relieved. It was, therefore, not surprising, that, in a neighbourhood where necessities abounded, they had the blessing and the good word of a large portion of its rural community; cheaply obtained in any rural locality, by characters of their cast, holding in it the highest place.

On the strength of this reputation, the simple-minded Irvings, who knew them only by their good report, and nothing at all concerning the inside of fine houses, had often wished that their daughter might have the good fortune to get into service at the "great house." And Mary herself, with her more polished young imagination, having been accustomed to invest the Douglases almost with the attributes of her aunt Kate's beneficent genii, whose power claimed awe, and whose benevolence love, (and with whom she was in fact much better acquainted,) considered such promotion, in connection with the vicinity to her beloved parents, the highest and most desirable to which she could aspire. But, though the idleness and intractability of her brother Saunders, more than his manual incapacity to assist his father in his bread-winning trade, made it necessary, as the family advanced in years, that this good girl should leave the home her presence so much solaced, in order to add to its earnings, and lessen its increased expenses, the industry and frugality of the senior Irvings had hitherto rendered their earnings sufficient for their decent support. Their honest pride of independence placed them above soliciting gratuitous aids; and, as the Douglases were not of that importunate class of philanthropists who lift the latch of poverty, and pry into its doings unbidden, it happened that the Irvings, though living so near them, had never, by any chance, obtained more of their notice than the condescension of a passing salute; and the good couple were somewhat puzzled how to proceed with their scheme for their daughter's advancement. Old Kate shook her head, and disapproved of it altogether. She would rather have seen her grandniece placed in some rustic homestead, and "kent way of life," than with those "gay grand fowk, and their clusters o' upsetting, fair-fashioned servants, and the maist o' them Englishers"—for Mrs

Douglas being an Englishwoman, and preferring those of her own country, had failed to find equal favour in the eyes of Scotland-loving Kate.

But her counsel, in this instance, was disregarded by her piously-trusting nephew, who considered his child of many prayers alike sheltered from vital evil, in whatever external circumstances placed. Had he felt and thought otherwise, many would perhaps have had more opportunities of being influenced by some other of his ancient aunt's notions and tastes; who, he used to say, "had gotten owre mony *b's* in her bonnet," (in jocose allusion to her brownies, ballads, and bogles,) "that, in his mind, had nae business to be working aneth a Christian's cap."

The introduction, however, of Mary to the favourable notice of Mrs Douglas, was at length brought about; not by counsel, nor by wisdom, but through the instrumentality of Daft Davie, who happened one morning to be issuing from the cottage just at the moment when that lady and her little daughter Laura drew near to it, emerging from the unusual experiment of an unattended ramble, through the wooded banks of their domain, that stretched upwards to the highroad, where, finding an outlet, they had determined upon returning home by that way. His person and fame (as well as the Boglegite wife's) were not unknown to them, and their alarm was great, when they saw him coming forth; not, however, with a firebrand in his hand, but with the smoking kail-stick, which Mary, in close pursuit, was endeavouring to wrest from him. On observing the strangers, the idiot instantly let go the subject of contest, and, clapping his hands, advanced rapidly towards them, shouting out, "Bonny leddies! bonny leddies!" in his most unearthly tones; which exclamation, however it might have sounded in the ears of the pretty Laura from other lips, had only the effect of increasing her terror, and quickening her retreating footsteps. Breaking away from her mother, who stood irresolute, the little girl fled at her utmost speed, and stopped not till, with new dismay, she found herself in an almost equally dreaded neighbourhood. She had reached the Boglegite! alone, upon the highroad, pursued, as she supposed, by Daft Davie, and now momently expecting to encounter old Kate, whom she had been taught, through menial gossip, to look upon as a sort of witch or hobgoblin. The bewildered feelings of an imaginative child of eight years old may easily be figured; and her joy, when, looking round, and Davie no longer in sight, she beheld help hastening towards her, in its more agreeable shape of his pleasing-looking sister. Mary gently took the little trembler by the hand, whose heart-beatings were almost audible, and whose tears now flowed fast, and, as she led her back to Mrs Douglas, she completely won her heart, by her kind and sensible soothing—and such were the circumstances of Mary's first meeting with her future mistress. That wayward heart was not ungrateful. Her deliverer from such complicated terrors became an object of peculiar interest to Laura. Mrs Douglas was much attracted by Mary's mild, ingenuous countenance, and still more by the remarkable union of modesty and self-possession in one so young; which at all times characterized her demeanour. Her pale but perfectly regular beauty both of features and form, which would have charmed a sculptor, had no gaudy attraction to strike the common observer, on a cursory survey, either with admiration or distrust; and, won by her darling and only daughter's importunities, she was speedily prevailed upon, after a few satisfactory preliminaries, to receive Mary, then eighteen, at the Hall; where, notwithstanding what Mrs Douglas considered the disadvantages of her rusticity and Scottish dialect, she was appointed to the office of being Miss Laura's personal attendant. To many it would not have been an easy nor an enviable situation. Laura had most of the faults which flattered vanity, impetuous temper, and precocious talents usually engender in the nurseries of misrule: a prejudice was speedily created in the servants' hall against Mary, as a favourite and a puritan. Her beauty drew upon her impertinences of a nature equally new and embarrassing to her, both from the lackeys, and the male visiters at the Hall; and she did not discover in its heads, that example of wisdom and benignity her warm fancy had figured—they were, in fact, neither more nor less than ordinary two-vizored fashionable-living personages, but with sufficient taste for the beauty and benefit of exemplary moral conduct, to notice and reward it in their daughter's favourite servant; and her warmer heart and unconscious disposition, readily found excuses for them in their surrounding temptations. She was eating their bread, and benefiting her beloved parents through their liberalities; and her duty was to serve, not to censure them.

And thus, through varying circumstances, and changes of position between country and town life, their mutual relation remained unbroken, until Laura had nearly completed her eighteenth year, and Mary her twenty-seventh. Then Laura one day found Mary weeping over an open letter, which she did not attempt to hide, but betrayed considerable agitation in delivering up to her. It contained dishonourable proposals from a young nobleman of high rank and fortune, who had followed Laura to the country as her professed and permitted admirer, and to whose union with their daughter her parents were ambitiously looking forward; and her indignant amazement may be imagined when she read, together with extravagantly expressed admiration of the superior beauty of her *waiting-maid*, a by no means covert intimation of his devoirs to herself having been prosecuted principally for the purpose of affording him opportunities of seeing her, "who, from the first moment he beheld her, had reigned unrivalled in his heart." The impulses of deeply wounded pride and vanity were precipitately acted upon; their worst suggestions against Mary were temporarily adopted by Laura, and proclaimed, outweighing the testimony of years. Mr and Mrs Douglas, who anticipated in this disclosure the overthrow of their cherished hopes for the splendid establishment of their daughter, would not believe but that Mary had been greatly to blame; and her dismissal from the Hall was summarily determined upon. Laura's vanity rather than her predilection had favoured the addresses of her recreant admirer, and she soon repented of her haste. Her secret heart deeply reproved her for the unjust condemnation she had drawn upon the innocent Mary; but the feeling how wrong she had been, did not help to appease her wounded pride, nor operate to repair the mischief. She, however, parted from her with tears and protestations of continued regard; and these completely sufficed to restore her to the clinging affection of her she had so cruelly injured.

But the consequences of this disturbance extended farther. Mary's fond mother, who was at the time oppressed by illness, was heart-stricken when she heard of the opprobrium cast upon the fair name of her darling child, and never recovered from the shock. And, a very few weeks after, Laura, revenging upon herself the infidelity of a lover who never had possessed her preference, but whose vanity she thought to retaliate upon, committed the imprudence of bestowing her hand clandestinely upon his rival; a young man of showy pretensions, but without fortune, whose addresses her parents had forbidden.

It would be irrelevant to my purpose to relate all the causes of the implacable displeasure of Mr and Mrs Douglas at this rash act, or to follow their young, infatuated, once idolised Laura, through its train of disastrous consequences; who, unforgiven, soon after accompanied her husband to the East Indies.

On hearing of her departure, Mary stole, at dead of night, to a favourite haunt of her regretted young lady

called "Laura's Bower," and there committed her first and only theft, in prosecution of a cherished superstition. This was the transplanting of a flower, to emblem the departed to a foreign land; which, if done with due observances relative to time, property, and secrecy, its drooping or flourishing leaves would faithfully continue to indicate the condition of the absent one. Mary, as most appropriate, chose a rose plant, which she placed in her cottage window, and watched and tended through several years, feeding her affectionate thoughts with associated favours, concerning her whom it was set to commemorate, without having obtained any sure intimation even of her being in existence. That cottage was no longer the same. The vicissitudes of the interval had been great to both parties. Mary had lost her father and elder brother; married, and become a childless widow. She was living in another home, but on the same road side, and not far from the dwelling of her birth; her only companions, her poor imbecile brother, and his constant follower, a now aged, wiry terrier; her Bible, her spinning-wheel, and her treasured leafy oracle; when her second meeting took place with her loved regretted mistress, under circumstances occasioning a more than nine days' wonder amongst her humble neighbours.

I cannot, I believe, more briefly and graphically describe this *true incident*, than by giving it in the native words of the rustic bard who made it the subject of a well-remembered ballad, entitled

MARY'S ROSIE TREE.

"Wae's me, my bonny rosie bush,
That glinted at my hand
Sae mony simmers, cheerily!
Now, wha's dune me this wrang?

"O Davie, feckless innocent!
I trow it has been ye;
Nane else in a' the parishen
Wad harmed my bonnie tree.

"I stole it frae my leddy's bower,
In sorrow, no wi' shame;
And set it for a propheey,
When she gaed far frae hame.

"It was my pleasant company
Through mony an eerie hour;
For, oh, *her een* had tented it—
That was a sweeter flower.

"When it lookit up, aye fresh and fair;
And blooming like hersel;
It tell'd me a' gaed weel wi' her—
But dule I now foretell."

As thus she stood and made her mane.
By her lanely biggin door;
The broken pot and rosie-bush,
She turn'd them o'er and o'er.

And Davie, in his witlessness,
Bnt leugh to see her greet;
When by their came a traveller,
Wandering on weary feet.

In widow weed a' garbed was she,
And pale, pale was her face.
She looked at Mary wistfully,
Then craved to rest a space.

"O guidwife, can you tell me
If, down in yonder ha',
There's ony that remember
The dochter that's awa?

"If onie now be living there,
Ance held that dochter dear,
Wha gaed unto the Indies,
And's been sae lang frae here?

"And, think ye they wad welcome her,
If back she came again,
Wi' naething but a breaking heart
O'a' was ance her ain?"

"Oh, where cam ye frae, woman,
That siccan speerings tell?
It gars me grue to look at ye;
But you canna be hersel!

"The bairn I dawted on my knee—
The beauty in the ha'—
That aye was like a straik of light,
Shining aboon them a'.

"But see ye to that bonny stem,
A' lying crushed and broken:
O' her that gaed beyond the seas
It was a cherished token.

"As ilka leaf on't had been gowd,
An' a' its dew the pearl,
I lo'ed it—a' for her ain sake,
That bonny leddy girl."

She flang her arms round Mary's neck—
She had nae words to speak.
Alace, the dowie propheey
Was rede upon her cheek!

On her return with her husband to Britain, Laura made an early excursion to visit her native vale. Her parents were dead; Rosehall was now in the occupation of strange proprietors: and, leaving her carriage and attendants at the village inn, which was within a short distance of the cottage in which she last saw Mary Irving, she walked thither alone; the door was slowly opened by Mary herself—grey-headed, trembling, and unrecognising.

Laura had been living in the habit of viewing the most of time's doings under falsely embellished aspects, and was utterly unprepared for the sad wreck she beheld. When Mary knew her mistress, who shuddered, but weepingly returned, on her withered cheek, the kisses she was feebly imprinting on the one hand she had taken, she pointed to her other one, which hung lifeless by her side, and then to her mouth. She had been stricken with palsy, and was dumb. Daft Davie, who was the only other human inhabitant of the cottage, looked at Laura with glaring eyes, as if ready to resent her intrusion; and her commiseration was deepened, to see her who had lavished upon herself so many tender cares, now, in her withered years and sad circumstances, alone with such an attendant. Mary read her thoughts, and first motioning deprecatingly to Davie, who appeared to understand her signal, and muttered out his customary response, "Weel, weel, guid lassie," she tottered towards the little table, where lay an open Bible. It was open at the 103d psalm. Mary sank heavily upon the cushioned chair which stood before it; passed her hand over the page; then pressed it on her heart, and then on Laura's; whose terror may be imagined when she saw her seized with intense trembling sudden, violent, universal. The internal agitation of the meeting, which could not find way in words, proved too much for her feeble frame. It was her last. The struggle subsided. A calm came over her distorted features. A bright gleam illuminated, for a moment, her pallid countenance—almost restoring it to former beauty; and with her distressed poor brother murmuring "guid lassie" in her ears, she fell asleep—and, may we not venture to believe awoke to the song of angels!

WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE VICTIM OF THE STATUTE-BOOK.

I HAVE prevailed upon the jailor, under whose care I am, to take off my heavy manacles, to allow me to write the following particulars, which I intend shall see the light, though not until my poor mother is dead; for I cannot bear to think that she should ever know that the memoirs of her son's misfortunes should, as a dying speech and declaration, be handed about, to court the eye and gratify the curiosity of the public. It is not that I have any warning to make, or any beacon to exhibit, whereby I might save others from the fate that, like a mighty snake, binds my body, and leaves this hand free, only to the effect of telling the number of its scaly folds with which I am entwined. It is not likely that any human being may ever be in my situation again. My object is to arraign the justice (injustice) of the blood-written laws of my country; and to shew that, while the statutes remain unaltered, unmodified—the rules of evidence unchanged—the hangman retains his name—the rope is made of hemp—and all the black formula of death is much the same as it was centuries ago—all other institutions and usages are undergoing a change, and man is becoming emancipated from the slavery of institutions whose iron chains were forged in the heat of war and rapine. Capital punishments—applied upon the lying evidence, the hurried trials, the stultified verdicts, the confused acts of our statute-book, for crimes of all dies and grades, from the stealing of a sheep to the taking away of the breath of life from the nostrils of God's elect of all living creatures—are the disgrace of the nation of England. If common humanity has no place in the breasts of our legislators, let my case speak: it has a language of its own, such as, perhaps, never before pealed from a heart crushed by tyrannical institutions and perverted justice: it speaks of innocence punished by death—a subject fitted for the mediation of angels—and proves that, when the conservative principle of punition is carried beyond a certain point of severity, the endless positions of an ever-varying society may produce instances of injustice that cannot be atoned for by tears of blood. I was born in the town of Ayr, on the west side of Scotland, and brought up, after the death of my father, which happened when I was very young, by my mother, a good and godly woman, who taught her son to seek Him "that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning." There are few Scotch mothers that do not try to inculcate on their children the principles of religion; but there are fewer that accomplish their task with so much efficacy as my parent, for I was naturally inclined to be pious, and loved more fervently than others do the harp of the mountain, that is tuned to the genius of Scottish music, the melody of Israel's beloved viols. Nor was it with me, as with many young people, that the flame of religion was fanned before the sense to understand its principles had acquired strength; for, before I was eight years of age, I understood the great scheme of mediation, while my tears flowed in gratitude for the wonderful sacrifice by which it was perfected. These thoughts distract me; and who is there that could look back, an *innocent* man, from the dark cells of a jail, on that scene of youth and innocence when the teacher and parent sat by us over the winter fire, and opened to our young fancies all the wonders of a saving providence, and not cry, with tears, What has come out of the light of that sun? Was I not taught that "the inheritance of the Almighty is destruction to the wicked," and "a *strange* punishment to the workers of iniquity"—strange, indeed, to be condemned to die for a crime of which one is innocent!

It was by the work of her hands that my poor mother brought me up to the verge of manhood. "She," as the Temanite said, "wandered abroad for bread," for "trouble and anguish made her afraid;" but, if toil was heavy for her, the weight was lightened by the thought that what she earned would be blessed by her son, with the grace of thanks to Him that gives what is good for both body and soul. It was a sight good for the proud hearts of the great—but they saw it not—that poor widowed creature, straining her weak nerves, and bathing her brow with the sweat of a painful toil, yet, through all, sustaining her spirit by the hope of her son, whose industry would, by the grace she taught him, return to her fifty-fold, when she could work no longer, the seed she travailed to sow. She saw not, and it was good for her, the darkness that was coming; neither did she hear from a hovering spirit that it would have been better for both of us if I had never been born, or that I had been carried from the cradle to the grave. So far my mother's efforts succeeded. I was comfortably fed and decently clothed, and, beyond all, a good soil was prepared for the education which she hoped also to be able to procure for me; but the assistance of another was required for that, and the master whom my father had served—a landed proprietor in the neighbourhood, of the name of Pringle—contributed to that desirable object; but he stopt short in his generosity; and a distant relation by my father's side, an engraver, of the name of Holmes, took me, when very young, into his shop, where I remained for about a year, when, my master having died, I was again thrown back on my mother. Mr Pringle again came forward, and prevailed upon my reluctant parent, who had cherished higher hopes for me, to allow me to become a servant in his house. This result of her long labour and weary toil made my mother weep "with the weeping of Jazer;" but, as destiny was to her ever the will of the Lord, that tends for good, though all unseen by mortal eye, she dried up her tears, and consented quietly, like her who inhabited Debon, to come down from her glory and "sit in thirst."

I had been, I think, about four years with Mr Pringle, and was now entrusted with the duties of his valet—a species of servants exposed to much contumely, and perhaps thereby rendered in their turn less worthy of the confidence of their masters. Religion has seldom any place among them; and the principles which I professed exposed me to some badinage, which made me follow the practice of the children of good men in the land of Egypt, who "did sacrifice secretly." I was steadfast in my covenant, and true to her who bound my heart to it in my younger days. A great part of my wages I remitted to my parent, and I would not have given the blessing of her thanks for the smiles of great men, and judges, and potentates; for who "among them is greater than he who honoureth his mother?"

Yet, at this time, I allowed my heart to be divided into affections, and disobeyed the injunction of Ecclesiasticus—"gaze not upon a maid." But I would have been more than man if I could have seen the beautiful comforter of my parent, and not felt my love "kindle as a fire." An orphan, of the name of Magdalene Dempster, who was brought up with a poor neighbour, was frequently in my mother's house on the evenings of Sunday, when I made it my filial duty to pass there as much of my time as I could spare from my service. This young woman's looks would have secured a conquest over me, though she had made no claims on my heart, by her attention to my parent. I conceived a strong passion for her, and soon learned the joyful tidings that she loved me. My mother observed the state of our feelings, and did not disapprove of my choice; for she knew that, as the prophet says, "there is a time to get and a time to lose," and he who loses the opportunity of getting a good helpmate in the pilgrimage of life, may fall into the hands of those who love him only for what may be got from him. That period of my pilgrimage was the only one on which the sun of life's happiness had as yet cast a beam to cheer me on; but I did not know that the life of man is only as the face of the heavens, whose gilded clouds foretell a storm. My pleasure made my heart shake, and give forth sweet sounds, as a timbrel that is struck in joy. Magdelene came and met me on the way as I went to my mother's; and when the sun was not far spent, we sat us down among the yellow broom, and were happier than they who "feed among the lilies." In the evening when I came away, she accompanied me a short distance on the road, that we might have every available moment of each other's company; and when we parted, it was to carry with us in our hearts an affection that would increase every moment till we met again. Thus passed a year, and I became impatient of a delay to the gratification of the object that, next to my mother's happiness, lay nearest to my heart. I got Mr Pringle's consent to marry. We were married; and, in the meantime, Magdalene staid with my mother, till a cottage, which was expected to be empty at the end of six months, should be ready for our residence.

Little more than four months had passed, after my marriage, when Mr Pringle—my kind master and friend—died, and my services were not required by the person who succeeded him. Though an orphan, I had not as yet tasted the bitter cup of life. It was now to be placed before me. But I had read that acceptable men are tried in the furnace of adversity. I took up my residence, for a short time, with my mother, in the expectation of being successful in getting a situation, as butler, with some of the gentlemen who had visited my old master, and heard from his lips those merits which came out of the blessing of a mother. I tried many of them; but every evening brought me home unsuccessful. "Ye that fear the Lord," said my mother, from the Prophet, "wait for his mercy;" and Magdalene threw into my countenance the cheerful light of loving eyes. Between these comforts, my disappointments were not, for a time, ill to bear. I would have been a bold man to have repined, with such a mother to pour into my bosom the sustaining love that is from beyond Orion, and a wife who was fairer "than a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of Engedi." Yet I began to suffer by feeling for my comforters. My mother had nothing to trust to but my earnings, and my Magdalene had been a dependent on the charity of others since her earliest childhood. My faith was a rational one; and I knew that it is not the way of God to feed the body by his spirit, nor the manner of love—though his wings drop with myrrh—to satisfy aught but the appetite of the heart. Our money dwindled away; and my hopes came back in the evening with no vine branch or fig-leaf to tell that the waters of misfortune had left the places where our food grew. But, whatever I felt, I expressed little; for I knew that my mother would have been pained by a murmur more by its evidencing a want of faith than a want of food.

The time came when all I had in the world was a pound note. I had been in the receipt of some chances at the inn; but these did not prevent the daily decrease of my small stock, till it came to that low ebb. I had almost resolved upon going to Edinburgh, and trying my fortune there, when, as I stood meditating on my dreary prospect, a gentleman of extremely genteel appearance alighted at the inn door, from a roan gelding. I held the bridle as he descended, and remarked that he looked at me more intently than strangers are in the habit of doing. He asked me to attend to his horse, and went into the inn, where he had not been long when he sent for me, and stated that he was on the outlook for a trusty servant—he was on his way to London, and had been basely deserted by his former valet, who had decamped, and taken with him a horse valued at fifty guineas. I replied that I would willingly accept of a fair offer; and we soon came to an agreement. My wages were to be fifty pounds a-year, with livery and chances. He gave me money, on the instant, to get a suit of clothes, and requested me to look out for another horse, as his time would not permit of any search after the one he had been robbed of. His name was Mr Caleb Winter—he was an Englishman—one of the finest-looking fellows, as well as the pleasantest, I had ever yet seen. His family, it appeared, lived in England. He had been on a tour to the Highlands, and was now on his return to London.

I went home, and communicated the intelligence to my mother and Magdalene. I need hardly say they rejoiced at it, even though the good came with the qualification of the separation, for a time, of me and my wife. Even in this, however, there was a mixture of good. She would contribute, in my absence, to the comfort of my parent; and the remittances I would be able to make from my income would support them, under the guidance of Him who is bountiful, and "ready to give where it needeth." Thus passed away a day of darkness, "as the morning spread upon the mountains." I bestirred myself actively in my new vocation, got into better spirits, dressed myself in my new livery, and bought a horse, to the satisfaction of my master, for my own use. We were now to depart for London. My good mother "gathered the children, and sanctified them;" and my Magdalene hung round my neck, weeping and sobbing as if she had been a yesterday's bride, of one day's joy, preparing for separation. She bore up well against my departure, till the ceremony came, which, opening as if by magic the floodgates of her feeling, shewed the depth of a faithful wife's affection. I was myself as strongly affected as she; but I contrived to make good use of that power which seems to be peculiar to our sex—something inexplicable, but in which shame has no inconsiderable part—to conceal the natural emotions inseparable from a departure—saying, "Peace! peace! where there was no peace;" and, forcing myself from her arms, I was soon on my way to London.

I found in Mr Winter a free, affable man, forming, as regarded his manners generally, and his conduct towards his servant, a remarkable contrast to the gentlemen of the same grade in Scotland. Like the most part of his kind, however, he seemed to have but a very indifferent feeling towards religion. I could have forgiven in him an occasional choleric oath, which did not make free with Scriptural names; but he was "as fed horses in the morning that neigh as they snuff the breeze"—he seemed to think that all power in this world was centred in man, and that he had only to speak that what he wished might be performed. This might be the ardour of young blood; but he passed kirks where the word was spoken, and never en-

tered; he prayed not a word that I could ever hear; he turned him daintily round on his saddle to look at a fair-faced giglot, as she passed, with the jaunty briskness of pride, on the way; and I even saw him smile, in a manner that savoured of luxury, on a pretty baggage of a bar-maid, whose eye held the "stock of a doctrine of vanities." Yet I could find no farther evil in him; for he never exceeded in the brutish folly of wine—he was liberal to a fault—gave freely to the poor whom we met in the broad ways—and had a good open "circumcised ear," which bore my freedoms of speech with meekness and composure. At least, however, he seemed to me a riddle which my Scotch wits could not solve, for he appeared good and ill by turns—one moment being glad, and even piping music like the birds that fluttered and sung in the hedges—a minute after, his throat seeming as dry and desolate as the bed of Nimrim, and a word he would not speak to me or any one else—then falling into a gloom which lasted for many hours, when he would not face man, for fear he might be interrupted in his meditations. These appeared to me strange contradictions; but a servant has no right to judge harshly of the master whose bread he breaks; and I never loved prying, "for a fool will peep in at the door into the house, while he that is well nurtured will stand without."

On arriving in London, we put up at an inn where we fared sumptuously, for Mr Winter seemed to care no more for money than if he had been master of his own mint. In the evening he went out, and when he returned, he told me that he had been bargaining for a house; and, accordingly, next day, we took up our habitation in a dwelling in the Haymarket, consisting of two divisions, an upper and a lower—the latter of which he intended for me. He wanted a maid-servant, and suggested that I should write down to Ayr for Magdalene, who would serve in that capacity. Overjoyed at this intelligence, I complied upon the instant, despatching a letter to her, and also one to my mother, in the latter of which I enclosed a ten-pound note which my master had generously given me for the purpose of paying Magdalene's expenses to London. I remember at this moment, and the hand trembles and makes the chains in which I am bound clank in my ears, as I think of the joy I felt in writing and despatching these letters, and enclosing "this oblation of the holy portion," which I kissed with tears of joy over and over before I committed it to the envelope. I was hastening with the letters to the Post-Office, when my master called me back; and, upon going up stairs to the part of the mansion which he wished to keep for his own purposes of study, he told me that he wished to pay the landlord of the house in advance, to avoid asking his friends, who wished him to go to reside with them, to become security for him; and, opening his pocket-book, he gave me fifteen pounds, requesting me to call upon Mr William Havering, in Whitechapel, to pay it to him, and be sure to get a proper receipt.

"Tell him," he added, "that you are come to pay the rent of the house in the Haymarket, No. 12—neither more nor less. I like few words; but, as I am an honourable, open-minded man, and hate even the appearance of anything like secrecy, I must tell you, because otherwise you may attribute the way in which I mean to live for some time to something not right, that I intend to keep out of the way of my father, Mr Alfred Winter, of Holmside, in Hertfordshire, but now, I understand, in London, in order to avoid a marriage which he and the lady's mother have planned for me, to which, I must admit, I am in some degree committed—though not on obligatory honour—and which, if I avoid by keeping out of the way, I may save myself from much pain, and the lady and her secretly-betrothed lover (a companion of my own) from unmerited misery. I have already passed a part of my time in Scotland; but I am wearied of travelling, and now intend to occupy myself here secretly in pursuing a favourite study, till I ascertain that my father despairs of ever acquiring my consent, and the lady's mother yields to the solicitations of her daughter, to allow her to marry the man she likes. This is enough for you, and will account for anything in my conduct which may appear to you curious or inexplicable, and, by exciting curiosity, give rise to surmises and latent inquiries. Such I abominate. You will find that the receipt you get for the rent of the house will be in *your own name*, and you will of course regulate your conduct so as not to produce any inconsistency between your real and assumed character."

It was nearly upon the hour of the shutting of the Post-Office, and my thoughts were more directed to my mother and Magdalene than to the subject of my master's speech, though I felt a glow of gratitude burning in my veins for the confidence he reposed in me, and while I saw that the slight deceit he was exercising, and wished me to participate in, was for *good*, in so far as it would bring two happy lovers together, who might otherwise drink of the waters of bitterness unto death. I recollected the words of Solomon, that "a prudent man concealeth knowledge," and told him that I would be faithful to him in all things that tended to good without a view to reward. Receiving the money, I hastened away, and soon got to the Post-Office, where, with eyes directed to heaven, I deposited the pledge of a son's love and a husband's fidelity. I then went to Mr Havering's, and told him I had come to pay the rent of the house, No. 12, Haymarket. He had the receipt prepared, and handed it over to me without saying a word—a circumstance that relieved me of the apprehension under which I laboured, that I might be forced to parry his questions, and be precipitated unwittingly, or from the regard I had to my master, and the anxiety I felt for the praiseworthy cause in which he was engaged, into some duplicity—a thing, of all others, I had been taught, by my incomparable parent, to hate as the origin of all evil—the first aspect of the insidious enemy of man, and the first encroacher upon the province of that grand entireness of the virtuous mind, which says, with him who sung to the chief musician, that sentence, containing all purity, "Oh, let me never be ashamed!" I glanced at the receipt; it was in favour of Mr Joseph Bannerman—that name (my own) which now rings in my ears as I pronounce it, as something not belonging to man—making me shudder till my irons rattle again through that dreadful cell, and echo away into the dark recesses of felons, like the sounds of the damned. I hastened home, and went up stairs to my master's private apartment. The door was locked, in consequence, doubtless, of his apprehension of some visit from his relations while I was out. I told him I had come with the receipt; and he opened the door, taking the paper from me in the passage, and asking me, in a hurried manner, if Mr Havering had put any questions. I answered that he had not, and retired to my bed in the lower part of the house.

My mind was too much excited to allow me to sleep. An enthusiasm belonging to a mind easily fired by the inspiration of virtuous feelings, set my heart in flame, and I pictured the most glowing images of my mother and Magdalene sitting by the side of their little flickering ingle, looking into it for auguries, after the manner of the Scotch, or reading by its light some portion of the holy book, having reference to my pilgrimage in a comparatively foreign land, when, as the tear started to my mother's eyes, as she was reading, "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not; cast in thy lot among us, let us all have one purse"—my letters would be brought to them, the offering of love would be kissed, my Magdalene would weep for very joy, and count how much of the money she could leave with my mother, who, as she heard her dutiful step-daughter's destination, would bless her and me—"for this shall his and your days be multiplied, and the years of your lives in-

creased." The train of images continued; and so sweet was the luxury of this portraying, by the aid of a glowing fancy, the happiness of these individuals in whom all my heart was garnered up—the husband's love and the son's holy reverence and sweet hallowed affection mingling together, and satisfying, by one engrossing feeling, all the desires that belong to heaven and earth—I could have renounced the blessing of sleep, and thought on and on for ever. I heard the clock strike two, and was somewhat surprised to find that my master had not gone to bed—his foot sounded lightly on the floor, and he seemed busily engaged in those studies to which he was addicted, but the nature of which I had had no opportunity of ascertaining. I never was curiously inclined, and I was satisfied that a man who acted on the noble principle of self-denial that now regulated his conduct, was "as the pure whose work is right;" and having expended every blissful energy of my fancy in calling up the images of my wife and mother, I fell into a sound sleep, from which I did not awake till beyond the proper hour of a servant's rising in the morning.

I rose hurriedly, thinking that my master would be waiting for his breakfast, and was not ill-pleased to find that he was still in bed. I got his morning meal prepared according to the instructions I had received from him, and went up to tell him the hour. I required to rap for some time before he heard me; and at last he came, and opened the door of the outer room, which he had set apart as a species of small diningroom—the inner apartment, which communicated with a small bedroom, being that appropriated to his studies. I set the breakfast; and, after he had partaken of it, he called me up, and gave me further directions, as to how I should conduct myself, with a view to keep his secret; all of which were reasonable, and not inconsistent with the views of religion and morality I had imbibed from my mother. He then told me to go and dispose of his horses, as he would not require them, while he was thus living in secret, and he could buy others when he again joined society and resumed his proper station in life. He cared nothing for money, his spirit, as it appeared to me, soaring far above such mean considerations as generally occupy the souls of immortal creatures in this world. I might get what I could for the horses—it was all one whether he made or lost by them. "Happy is the man," I said to myself, as I looked on the noble figure of the youth, as he stood before me, expressing his contempt of that which opens the doors of Gehinna—"happy is the man that findeth wisdom; for the merchandise of it—it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold." I did as he desired, and in the afternoon returned with the price of the horses. I made £10 upon the one I rode, and the other brought its original price. He scarcely counted the money, which, I recollect, was in five pound-notes. He laid it down on the table; and, in a short time, called me up again, and told me to go and get the money turned into small notes, which he said he required for various little purposes of charity. "It is upon the wings of charity," he added, with a smile that made me love him, and forget the former inconsistences I had observed in him—"It is upon the wings of charity that a man getteth to Heaven;" and I was not slow in my answer, that "he that giveth to the poor shall not lack." I went with increased energy to obey his command; and, though I had many shops to go through before I got all the notes changed into small ones, I rejoiced that I was in the service of him who looked down upon charity as the sun upon the earth when his rays are softened by the breath of the morning. Having succeeded in getting all the notes changed, I returned, made a faithful account to him, and was as well pleased with my labours as if I had been occupied in distributing the money among the poor, and saving my excellent master from the blessed labour of doing so himself.

I now felicitated myself on my enviable situation; and there was no part of the conduct of my master towards me that delighted me more than the entire confidence he placed in me; for I felt proud to think that my mother's invaluable precepts were thus made apparent in their workings, and could not doubt that, "as the spirit of a man is the candle of the Lord," my virtue and fidelity, shining through every part of my conduct had secured for me the confidence of a good man. I was on the eve of experiencing more of his absolute faith in me; for, on the very next day, I was surprised by receiving, through the twopenny post, a letter containing a bank of England note for £50. There was no writing in the letter beyond the two initials of G. B.; and, knowing in an instant that it would be for my master, I took it up to him. I was right—it was intended for him.

"Mr Barrow, my agent, has been as good as his word," he said, as he took the letter from me; "and in this I have another instance of your fidelity. From the first word you spoke I saw you had been properly tutored—probably by some excellent parent; and, indeed, with the exception of his wishing me to marry against my will, my father has been to me an excellent counsellor. But fidelity ought to be rewarded with more than words."

And, as he spoke, he made me a handsome present, which I received with tears of gratitude; yet, the gift was not half so dear to me as the words by which it was accompanied; and I could have hugged him to my bosom for his allusion to one who had "given me the inheritance of Israel," and "smote the first born" of a sinful heart, that all that came thereafter might be good. Every day shewed me more and more how happy I would be when my Magdalene arrived; and, after several days, during which I felt myself more a master who commands than a servant who breaks the bread of his lord, I looked anxiously for her arrival. I set about preparing everything, in the part of the house appropriated to us, in such a manner as would shew, at the first glance, that I had not sent for her in vain; and, though I could not say "I had perfumed our bed with myrrh, and olives, and cinnamon," I could exhibit to her a habitation of peace, where (by my master's kindness) there was every comfort that could contribute to the happiness of virtuous affection. How strangely does love exhibit itself! I fixed on the warmest corner of the ingle where her chair should stand—it was already occupied by the eye of my fancy—I saw her sitting there, discoursing to me of Broad Albin, and happy Coll, and of her she had left in it dearer to me than all. The tear that glistened in her eye as she delivered to me my mother's blessing, I saw dry up as she turned to view the new gown I had bought for her; and I felt the glow of the kiss of her thanks as she threw herself on my bosom, and yielded to the hysterical expression of nature's softest emotions, in her own impressive and heart-touching language. Oh, why do I dwell on these soul-intoxicating fancies, when they were realized, ay, enjoyed, as those elaborately contrived enjoyments which glide over the earth as the avant-couriers of the destroyer! My Magdalene arrived. I was looking out at the window at the time, thinking of her, when I saw her coming along, looking anxiously at the numbers of the houses. I needed but one glance of an eye, whose light was to me as that of "the moon walking in brightness," and in an instant she was in my arms. My warmest dreams were changed into realities. We had both Elihu's zeal to speak, and Elihu's silence, till the first emotions died "by their own strength;" and then I got my parent's renewed blessing—the pledge of undiminished love—the pretty gossip of woman's lips, sweeter than the inspiration of poets, till, hour by hour, the realities of our new situation broke gradually in upon "our love's young dream;" and I recounted to her the enviable situation I held; shewed the

house of which she was, as it were, mistress; the excellent character of my master; the secret of his position; the confidence he reposed in me; the presents I had got from him; till her eyes glistened again as brightly as they had done in the fire of love; and we were so happy, that we were like to have made an image like that of Horeb, and fallen before the golden idol.

A very few days soon discovered to Magdalene greater than she had yet seen, and everything seemed to prosper with us. In about a month afterwards, I sent my mother another five-pound note, which I got from my master, in whose praises Magdalene was higher than even myself. She attended him often when I was engaged in going his messages; and every new phase of his character seemed to charm her the more. His carelessness of money absolutely dazzled her simple, frugal mind; and those noble qualities he exhibited to her, were not dimmed by the discovery that he had, as she thought, a religious inclination of the heart "to God's testimonies." One day she came in with a beautiful Bible in her hand.

"What do you think of my present?" she said, smiling, as she laid it before me, and counted out the balance of a five-pound note, which our master had given her to buy the holy book.

I looked at the Bible; but my mind was dwelling on another subject.

"Did he allow you to give your own price for it, Magdalene?" replied I.

"There lies the merit of the gift," said she, smiling. "He had a one pound-note in his pocket-book; but he disdained to limit my taste, and gave a five-pound one, that I might gratify myself at any extent of price."

"Another trait of his generosity," said I; "but it will not be lost. Take up to him the balance of the money, and shew, by the moderate sum you have paid for the book, that the good never abuse the confidence of the generous hearted."

With a light step Magdalene went up to him, and returned soon again with a heightened feeling of pleasure; as she told me—what perhaps would not have surprised one farther removed from the sphere of simple rusticity in which she had been trained—that he chided her good-naturedly for not buying a dearer gift for herself, and threw the money into his pocket *without counting it*—a circumstance so unusual, and so unlike the scrupulous arithmetical processes of the small grocers of Ayr, with whom she had dealt, that she was utterly at a loss what to think of it. Our peace and comfort continued, several months passed, and we grew every day more sensible of his kindness. He required to get the fifty-pound note, received from Mr Barrow, changed, to enable him to pay his tailor, whose account must, as I thought, have been a large one, or his charities must have borne heavy upon his purse in the meantime; and, the latter reason I was inclined, from my knowledge of his extreme generosity, to deem the true one; but inquiry was out of my province, and I went to a private banking house, got the note turned into smaller notes of five pounds each, two of which he afterwards gave me as another advance of my wages, and with a view, as he said, to send another remittance to my mother. Magdalene had been able to give her only three pounds of the ten pounds I sent; thus she had got eight pounds from me; and the power now given me of again relieving my aged parent filled my heart with a new-born joy that threw its influence over the minutest trait of our domestic concerns. That very night I sent off one of the notes, and Magdalene wrote *her* letter on the third page of the sheet that contained mine. He alone who has sent the tribute of a son's love to his parent can appreciate the enjoyment of that night. If a "gift," as the prophet says, "has a grace to every man living," what is the virtue, the beauty the soul-entrancing influence of that which fills the heart of a mother with gladness!—and how true is it that the grace and working effects of it are not limited to the time or the occasion, but, like a sweet medicament that is pleasant at the taking, is yet more delightful in its regenerative operation on the whole heart, being the life and conversation of him who rejoices in the blessing? That night was another of the happiest I ever witnessed. Magdalene and I sat by ourselves and enjoyed the good things of this life in peace; for our master always kept his study, and every pleasure we experienced seemed to be sanctified by the recollection that she who was my parent and her benefactress would enjoy her portion. I watched my wife's face as she drank her health—the tear stood in her eye; and it was that (the most beautiful of all) which comes from the heart, which offers love and pity as sacrifices to Him who cherishes them as the fairest gift of his creatures. I could have said, with the servants of Holofernes—"There is not such a woman from one end of the earth to the other, both for beauty of countenance and wisdom of words."

While thus sitting over the fire, our attention was directed to a carriage that stopped at the door. We heard the door of it open, then a pattering of feet, and low broken words of converse passing between several people about the front part of the house. The door opened suddenly, and two men entered, leading between them an aged female. We heard at same time several feet upon the stair leading to our master's room, and a sudden beating and tramping upon the floor, as if people were rushing backwards and forwards; then, subdued voices, in broken, impassioned snatches; then the sound of a loud crash, as if the door of his apartment had been forced; again rushing backwards, a sudden and headlong descent down the stair, and in a moment, three other men precipitated themselves into the room, calling out,—

"Oh, he's here! he's here! All's well! all's well!" I stood in a trance. Magdalene was by my side, staring wildly first at one, and then at another; when, in an instant, the aged female, who was muffled up in the old-fashioned Scotch plaid, ran forward, and threw herself round my neck.

"My son! my son!" she cried, and lay sobbing on my bosom.

"Enough—enough," cried one of the men, in a rough voice. "She calls him her son—he is our man. Jem, get your handcuffs prepared. Take the wife, too. Search the house, Whittaker and Jones."

Two men again went up stairs, and we heard their feet overhead, as if they were in our master's room; but not one word of the latter reached our ears, though we were satisfied that he was there when the men entered. The man called Jem seized my mother roughly by the waist, and pulled her away; but it was only to precipitate her to the ground, for her energies were gone, and she had been supported alone by my bosom. The sight of my parent, stretched out upon the floor, pale as a corpse, and presenting none of the appearances of life, rendered me frantic—I lifted my arm and struck the man to the earth. Magdalene rushed between us, uttering frightful screams; but was instantly seized by another of the men, who proceeded to force upon her arms a pair of strong handcuffs. Regardless of my mother, who still lay among our feet, apparently lifeless, the two other men (the one I had felled to the ground having recovered) rushed upon me, and, overcoming all my struggles, soon bound me so effectually that I could not move an arm. One of the men then whispered something into the ear of the one who had bound Magdalene, and he immediately went out.

My mind, during all this extraordinary scene, seemed to be locked up by some freezing power, which laid a restriction upon every thought. I had never yet asked the

reason of all this sudden violence; the drama had moved before me like one of those horrible pageants that flit before the mind of a victim of ephialtes, when one has the power only to see and shudder. The screams of Magdalene rung in my ears, and the extended form of my aged parent glared on my eyes like the presiding genius of nightmare, yet without the power to remove the charm by which my mind was bound up. All again was silence. The men, who waited for some one, stood and gazed or whispered to each other; and one of those who had been searching up stairs, came down, holding in his hands a number of steel instruments, like those used by engravers, which my early occupation rendered familiar to me, but which I had never seen in my master's apartment, with a great number of papers, having the appearance of English bank notes. They continued their whispers, but I could make nothing of what they said; and, in a few minutes, I saw my mother's head move as she recovered from her swoon.

"Josey, Josey, my bairn—my last, my only hope!" she cried, as she looked wildly round her, and struggled to rise. "What's this? Thae men said they were sent by you to bring me to live and end my days wi' you. O God! is this the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest? Thae messengers have fed me, by the way, wi' wine and strong meats; and what hae they brought me to see? My bairn in irons! Speak, Josey, are ye dumb, man?"

My senses were gradually returning to me, but my mind was still shrouded in ignorance and mystery.

"You have brought these men with you, mother," said I, "as I held out to them my manacled hands. What mean they?"

The question acted like a charm on the grief of Magdalene, whose agonies, expressed by loud lamentation, seemed to scorn the articulated question of a reason, where reason there could be none.

"Ay, ay," she now cried, as if suddenly recurring to what her grief had made her forget, "what is the reason of this violence to those who have walked in the commandments of Him who who will judge ye as well as us. Speak, ye hardened men! Why do ye scowl thus on us who have never wronged any of God's creatures, or broken the laws of our country?"

And she ran forward, holding out her hands to the men, who stood like iron statues; while my mother trailed her legs along on the ground, and clasped the knees of him who held the bunch of notes and the instruments of steel.

"Mr Jones!" she exclaimed, as if she knew him intimately, "for God's sake explain this mystery! You brought me from Scotland to see my son, and used fair words to induce me to leave my peaceful home. 'The hoary head is a crown' that's no usually despised; there's already grey hairs on your own head, and maybe ye've a son whose affection kept off the first traces o' the snaws o' eild, and wha has comforted ye as mine has comforted me. Look there, and think what it is to be a father; and, oh, forget not what it is to be a mother, if you ever saw the wife o' yer bosom sorrowing for her first born!"

"Hush, woman," replied the man, sternly; "your son is charged with forging notes on the Bank of England, and uttering them knowing them to be forged."

"Oh, these notes I got frae him!" she cried, turning a terror-struck eye upon me; "but it canna be, it canna be; he was only a year wi' Holmes, wha never graved notes."

"So he was an engraver!" said one of the men, laughing ironically.

I now saw some glimmerings of what I conceived to be the truth, and my mind ran back and collected instantaneously some of the remarkable circumstances of the conduct of my master. A dreadful array of damning evidence flashed upon me; the fearful reminiscences started up successively like spectres, each more terrible than another; and the confusion around me—the moans of my mother, the wailings of Magdalene, the grim aspects and ominous under-breathed communings of the men—all combined to confuse me, till the consciousness of innocence came upon me like the whisperings of a good angel, and I cried out—

"Where is Mr Winter? He can explain all this. Haste up stairs and bring him here."

"There is no one up stairs," replied the officer, who had been searching the house; "and why should there?—the house is your own—the receipt for the rent is in your own name, and in my hands."

The noise of another carriage was now heard, which was the signal for our removal. Magdalene was dragged to the door in spite of her struggles and screams, and I did not see her again, for their object was to keep us separate; and, for that purpose, the second coach had been sent for. I was next laid hold of; and, the moment the men put a hand on me, I was fast locked in the arms of my mother, who, having been roused again from the state of despair-born dream that succeeded her swoon, struggled forward, sinking at every step, and seized me so forcibly, sobbing and ejaculating broken words, that force was resorted to, to free me from her grasp. I saw her again fall, and heard her cries, as I was hurried precipitously from the room, and thrown into the other coach, which went off at a rapid rate in the wake of the other; the sound of the wheels of which came on my ears as my mother's cries died away.

We were conveyed to the police office, and placed in separate rooms. I was still comparatively in a state of stupor; but could too well hear that a number of people were arriving at intervals, and that an examination was in progress. Having been locked up, I listened at the door, and heard Magdalene sobbing loud, as she was hurried along, to be, as I supposed, examined. The door opened, some time afterwards; a number of people were introduced into the room where I was; and I could recognise among them many of the individuals whom I had had recourse to when getting exchanged the notes which Mr Winter had requested me to get disposed of. They all fixed their eyes on me, and, doubtless, recognised me; and, in particular, I saw Mr Havering busy in conversation with one of the individuals present, who seemed to take a lead in the investigation. They kept whispering to one another, until all the identifiers seemed satisfied. I shook at all this dread array of mystery; my confidence forsook me. "The diviners had seen a lie," doubtless, and had "told false dreams;" but I had no power to shew the truth, for, at this moment, the thought rushed into my mind, like the blue light of a spectral vision, that I could not even prove that *any one had ever seen* my master, after we came to London. The thought was striking, nay, wonderful; and as my mind wandered in the inane void of this dreadful negative, I thought I would have gone mad. I believe there was a temporary insanity on me; for, as I shook my hand-cuffs and rolled my eyes about, the people gazed at me, and I heard some one whisper—"He is personating madness." This calmed me a little. I again rested upon my innocence, and turned my face to heaven, as the words of Darius rose in my mind—"Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee." The people now went out, and I was again left by myself. I now thought of my examination; but every effort I made to think of proving that *I had a master in London at all*, let alone of establishing that the graving implements were his—that he forged the notes—(if they were forged)—that he sent me with them—that he gave me those to send to my mother—fell back upon me with a death-weight, and crushed my spirit, till I sank down in a state of exhaustion and despair.

I was lying groaning on the ground, when the officers

again entered, to take me before the judge. I could scarcely walk; and, though I muttered, "he delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders in heaven," the words had no effect upon my heart—they were mere breath, and I shook against the terrible sign that God seemed to have forsaken me. When placed before the judge, I was flurried, and presented every appearance of guilt; for, still the horrid weight was upon my mind that I could not make even a feasible story of God's truth. The examination began; and I answered, according to the things that had been swerving, neither to the right nor to the left. I began at Ayr, and traced all my progress to London; stated what had happened there; my master's secret; my duties as a servant; the reason why I took the receipt for the house in my own name; the selling of the horses; the exchange of the notes—(all of which had been replaced, as I now suspected, by false ones, when my back was turned;) the receipt of Mr Barrow's remittance; and the exchange of that with the presents to my mother; everything, in short, truly and faithfully, yet timidly and nervelessly as ever. The doubting and incredulous eye of the judge shook me by its cruel expression. He appeared to me to think that the answer to all I had said, lay in one damning question—

"Were you ever an engraver?" said he.

"Yes," I answered, (for I abhorred a lie, though it had possessed the charm of my salvation from the rope;) "but I was only a year with Mr Holmes."

"One of quick parts may learn much in a year," was his answer, accompanied by a look that shewed he believed me guilty.

"Now," he said, "we have heard a great deal from your wife and from yourself about some one you call Mr Winter, on whom it pleases you to lay all the crime of which you are charged. Can you tell me anything of him—where he came from, who are his relations, with whom he was acquainted?"

"His father was stated by himself to be Mr Winter of Holmside, in Hertfordshire; and the name of his agent is Mr Barrow."

"Since your wife was examined," replied he, "inquiries have been made about these names, and no such individuals are supposed to exist. Can you not give me the name of any one individual who ever saw your master in London?"

I stood silent. The fact was undoubted. I could not condescend on a single person who had ever seen him since he came to London. It would have been better for me if I had continued silent, for my answer, when it came, was a wild rhapsody of incoherent efforts to express my own wonder that I could tell nothing of him, and could condescend on no one in the city who had ever seen him. And I could plainly perceive that, by this, I sealed the fate of my testimony. It was evidently considered as a piece of ill-executed invention, bungled, besides, by my own imputed sense of guilt, which dried up my throat, till my tongue, that rattled in my parched mouth, could not obey the behest of my concerted ingenuity. Ere I was removed, however, I recollected myself so far as to be able to say that the people of the inn at Ayr, and in the inns along the road from thence to London, would swear, if called upon, that I, at least, served and journeyed with a master, whose name, as stated by me, some of them would, in all probability, recollect. My letters to my mother, too, made reference to Mr Winter; and if these were got, they would go far to prove the truth of my story.

"Was he not an accomplice?" said the examinator; 'and, as for your letters, it is not likely you would divulge the true mode by which you got the money to your parent. Yet these things shall be inquired into, and you will receive the benefit of the inquiry.—There is a strange simplicity in the art of these rogues," he said, in a low voice, to an individual who sat by him

The examination finished to the satisfaction of the prosecutors. I was sent to Newgate. I knew nothing of the fate of Magdalene; but had reason to think she was also confined there as an accomplice. My mother was kept away from me, as she was a strong witness against me. I was heavily loaded with irons, and lay upon the floor groaning bitterly, till a disturbed sleep overtook me about three in the morning, when the most frightful visions rose before me, assuming all shapes and forms, but draining the foundations of those types from the book which I had made the rule of my life. "The Ancient of days I thought did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool; his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued, and came forth from before him, thousand, thousands ministered to him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the judgment was set and the book was opened." I was uttering these words of Daniel, which I had by heart; the vision was inspired by them, and glowing vividly and more vividly, inspired, in turn, my voice which, rising higher and higher till it reached the dissonance of a scream, I woke in the dark, and, tossing about my limbs, made the chains rattle forth the dreadful evidence of my situation. I thought I heard the groans of Magdalene in the next cell; but, all my efforts to make myself certain of the circumstance, were counteracted by loud gusts of wind, that whistled through the gratings of the windows; and several loud peals of thunder shook the fabric of the jail, and wound up my accumulated horrors. I slept no more that night; but, my waking visions were as frightful as my dreams; for, in spite of all the assurances I drew from my knowledge of Scripture, there arose a sickening feeling of utter helplessness—the birth of the consciousness of my want of the evidence of man to speak for me—that seemed to "strike down the truth to the ground," and left me a hostage for the sins of man, in the hands of that God whose ways no man can find out.

I can scarcely tell how I passed the following two days and nights; the time was composed of alternated periods of hope and despair; and all I heard was the turnkey's heavy step, the rattling of his keys, and, occasionally, the hollow moanings of the individual I took for Magdalene, in the adjoining cell. On the third day, I got the assistance of an attorney, through what means I know not. I told him my extraordinary case. He seemed to believe my story, but stared in amazement at the array of evidence against me, and the small gleam of established truth that appeared to lighten the darkness of that mystery that invests appearances with magnified proportions. He was a quick man, and hurried away instantly to examine the window, from which my master must have escaped on the night of the apprehension; to inquire into the circumstances of his meeting with Havering, when he agreed to take the house; to get my letter to Magdalene when I mentioned his name; and to ascertain if any of the people in Ayr could speak to my having been employed by him as his servant. Ten days of anguish passed, and the result of his inquiries was communicated to me. Winter had taken care to pull down the sash of the window by which he escaped, so that, when the officers forced the door, they saw no trace of any one having been there. Mr Havering admitted that a man called and made an agreement for the house in my name; but the account he gave of him differed so much from the description of Winter's person, that there seemed reason for supposing that he had deputed some accomplice to execute this part of his scheme. Magdalene's letter had been destroyed, and those to my mother shewed nothing in my favour; while no one in Ayr could say more than that I left that place in the employment of a person who was never seen there before, and whose name was unknown to them. It even came out against me, that I had, while

living in the house, parried questions put to me by some who inquired if any one lived in the house besides me and my wife; and she too had observed the same care to conceal the fact that Winter was living there in secret. How little was it known, that we conceived we were doing good, and saving a young woman from a forced marriage by thus concealing our master. "Do not evil that good may come of it." How was this truth made manifest to us? If we had not committed this departure from the plain and open way of truth, we might have been saved; for Winter might have been seized by the officers as a suspected character, in consequence of his habits of going out at night; but, having thus concealed the man whom we now endeavoured to inculpate, all the endeavours of our legal advisers to account for our conduct, by what was indeed the real truth, rather tended to bind the chain of circumstances closer and closer, and make our guilt the more manifest.

The evidence for me thus dwindled into nothing; while the mass that was procured against me was, from the very nature of the case, greater than was ever known to be produced against any forger that ever was hanged at Tyburn. The house was mine; the engraving instruments were found there; I had been an engraver at an early period of my life; a great number of notes were found in the house; a great number had been circulated; every good note I had given to Winter had been replaced by him, when I was in the low part of the house, by a bad one, which it fell to me or my wife to get changed; and, during all these proceedings, no one ever saw any person under whose authority I acted—I being householder, engraver, and utterer. How was it possible to conceive a stronger case of forgery?

As the day of my trial approached, and no trace had been got of Winter, I saw the full extent of my danger—I could not avoid a conviction—and Magdalene, who was indicted also, might be fortunate in escaping with transportation. I had not seen her; my mother was kept from me, and none of my relations in Scotland would own me. The day came; I met my Magdalene in the dock; we looked at each other in silence, through bloodshot eyes, that were past the stage of weeping; I perceived that she trusted implicitly in heaven; for she turned her face upwards when she met my gaze; but, for myself, I was lost in the workings of a mind that adhered to the dictates of my revered faith, and could only wonder why it was His pleasure that I should fall an innocent victim to bloodthirsty laws which I had never broken. The trial proceeded. Why should I, even if I could, detail the evidence that was led against me? I have already, in effect, given it. Any man who has read my narrative, may see it too well. My judges shall read it, and feel it, as if the characters were traced in fire, and burned the orbs that glanced over it. There was no evidence worth mentioning for us. The story of Winter was a phantom or an invention of guilt, to lay crime on the back of another. I sickened as the evidence proceeded, and lost my power of following it, during hours of a wild, dreamy, unconsciousness of everything but the horrors of the gallows; the rope of which I felt round my throat, as my impeded respiration prevented the blood from circulating in the cervical veins, and, stopping it in my head, produced a fire as if scathing irons had been trailed along my brain. The yell of my wife, when sentence of death was pronounced against me, (her own fate being transportation for life,) roused me to a more *living* sense of my condition.

We were hurried back to prison. I am to die to-morrow; and I write this narrative by the side of the jailor, who has unloosed my hand for that purpose. I am now past all complaint: there is some secret purpose in heaven to be served by my death. I am not told "to put forth a riddle" like Ezekiel; but let those poor conceited wretches, who lie at ease in the sunbeams of legislation, and think that the law erreth not, but is ever bright, to lighten good and shew forth evil, read my narrative, and tremble as they think (what is true) that many have died as I am to die—sacrifices to the bloody Moloch of their statute-book. I have heard of some philosopher who wrote, that it were better that one innocent man should die, than that twenty guilty ones should escape. Oh, that that man had felt one moment—one single moment of this fire that burns in my brain. Were he to live for ever, he would not find space for a sufficient repentance of his maniac-thought. Were my mother dead ere to-morrow, one-half of my agony would be abetted; but that is not decreed. Farewell, my too dear Magdalene!—my mother, whose name I can scarcely write for trembling!—and farewell, thou world, which would be fair, were it not for the devices of men! Truth shall not ever be quenched: there is a light in the sky, which shines, and will ever shine, though man shall rear against it the vapours of his wisdom; and there is a mercy there that his bloody laws shall never diminish. To-morrow, by this hour, I shall see that light and feel that mercy! Adieu! J. B.

I have read the preceding over, and the paper is wet with my tears—Magdalene and my mother, now by my side, have listened to every word. About two hours since, they were introduced to me by an officer who held a paper in his hand. It was a reprieve. Winter had been caught by the officer Jones; and the innkeeper at Ayr, who had remained in town after the trial, identified him. It turned out that he was an old offender with a new name, and thus it is made clear to me, that if I had not concealed him, I never would have fallen into the misfortune from which I have been so wonderfully saved by an all-seeing Providence. The moment that Winter was seized, the circumstance of our ready confessions struck, with proper force, the minds of the authorities. Every effort was made to get at the truth; and, if I have arraigned the laws, I am bound to laud the men who dispense them. Oh, the joy of that moment, when I again clasped to my bosom my wife, and hung on the neck of my parent! There was not one word spoken. The chaplain, who was attending some of the criminals, entered; and, having taken up the narrative I had written, read it to a number of individuals whom curiosity had drawn in to see the effect of a reprieve working on the minds of the innocent. Many of them wept as he proceeded, and as they cast their eyes on us, who sat with the "burden of unspeakable joy" still on our hearts. Our first words were to God. I have retained the manuscript through many years of prosperity, and have read it to my children. It has been a good chastener of our thoughts of this world, and has proved, in its effects, that heaven has its own ways of claiming and retaining those who otherwise might have fallen before the Baal of earth; for my success in life has been nearly unexampled, and in the midst of riches I might have set up another image than that of Him who snatched us from destruction. Let no one look with a sullen eye on the misfortunes that come not of himself. Prosperity has ruined more souls than ever did misfortune or the pleasures of the body. I have seen and drunk the light of the jewel in the toad's head. J. B.

WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

CORNET CASSILS.

Everybody knows—and they know, too, we dare say, by their own experience—that mistakes will sometimes happen, even with the most careful and correct. This being, then, as we take it for granted, an acknowledged fact, we proceed, without farther preamble, to give the history of a rather odd sort of blunder, that occurred, not many years ago, in a certain county in this our ancient kingdom of Scotland; which blunder originated in a curious oversight of the worthy representative of the county referred to, and involved in it awkward consequences to a certain personage resident in the same county. It is rather an amusing story; so we shall not curtail it of any of its fair proportions, but give it at all the length to which its merits entitle it. We shall, in short, proceed *secundem artem* with it, and lay before the reader all those minute details which form the life and soul of every story; and, without which, few stories would be good for anything.

Acting on this principle, then, we proceed to say that, in the county to which we have already referred, there is a certain little village, which, to prevent inconvenient identification, we shall call Castlerigg. It consists of a few scattered houses, and contains an ancient chapel, or rather the remains of one, and a burying-ground, of high antiquity as a place of sepulture. At the northern extremity of this village, there stands an isolated and self-contained house, of one story in height. Over the front door of this house is a sign, the letters of which look dirty and faded, but are yet legible enough to inform the passer by that it is the residence of Walter Cassils, and that the said Walter Cassils deals in British spirits, porter, and ales. The same sign-board further intimates, that Walter sells "strawberries and cream," and "fruits in their seasons;" these intimations being conveyed in letters curiously thrown into semicircles at either end of the sign in question, and surrounded with wreaths, done in chrome yellow, so as to form them into distinct compartments, at once the more readily to attract the notice of the passer by, and to avoid confusion in the intelligence presented to the public eye.

Walter Cassils, then, was a publican. He was; and a gardener to boot, as the reader may have already conjectured. Walter's garden lay immediately behind his house; and it was from this garden he drew the vegetable portion of the delicacies which his sign-board offered to the public. Between the house and the garden, Walter drove a very fair trade; having a good run of custom for all the various commodities in which he dealt, both horticultural and spiritual. In person, Walter was a stout, square-built man, of middling stature, with a round, florid countenance —said countenance discovering a great deal of intelligence and shrewdness; but more *pawkiness* than either—more, indeed, than both put together. In manner, Walter was frank and outspoken; and, as a landlord, had something very taking about him, even although you knew that he was somewhat of a cunning shaver, and not altogether to be depended upon. At the time of our story, Walter was in his fifty-sixth year—a hale and hearty old cock. His family, at this period, consisted of two sons and two daughters. The former he bred to his own business, which was that of a gardener; the latter, he left to the guidance of their mother. The names of the two sons were Andrew and Moses. Moses, the youngest, was the very model of his father in all respects, physically and morally. Andrew, again, was a different sort of man. In person, he was tall and gaunt; in disposition, simple and good-natured, but, withal, not a little conceited and vain. What he was vain of, it would not be so easy to say; as he had no one single earthly qualification, either mental or personal, on which to rest such a feeling. But what does this signify? It is perfectly possible to be vain without having anything whatever to be vain of. This was Andrew's case; and it is only one out of a hundred to be met with every day.

Having given this brief description of Walter Cassils and his family, we proceed to say that, on a certain evening in the month of July 1834, Andrew, who had just returned home from a neighbour's, where he used to go every night after his day's work was done, for an hour's gossip, and a peep of the *Scotsman* newspaper—said neighbour being the twenty-fifth reader of a certain copy of that paper—informed his father that he had just learned that the county (it was the period of an election) was about to be disputed; that a Whig candidate had arisen to oppose Sir Lawrie Langlines, the present canvasser; and that it was thought it would be a severe contest.

"That's the stuff for troosers!" shouted Walter, slapping his hand on his thigh, in an ecstasy of delight. "Faith, that'll let folk see what folk's worth! Competition's the soul o' business. There's my vote hasna been worth a custock to me for three years, just for want o' competition. It's been a thing o' nae value in the market. Hardly reckoned worth asking, let alane bringing a fair consideration in return. The county disputed! My feth, that's gran' news, Andrew. It'll do baith you and me guid, or I'm mistaen."

"Hoo, faither?" said Andrew, simply enough.

"Hoo! ye guse!" responded papa, contemptuously. "Do ye no see that it'll get us interest, man? Do ye no see that there maun be something gaun for guid votes? A bit snug birth for you somewhere—say the Customs or Excise. It'll make a man o' ye, Andrew," added Walter, slapping his son energetically on the shoulder. "Ye'll sune be gaun aboot wi' a pen stuck in ahint your lug; and that ye'll find a hantle mair comfortable than gaun aboot wi' a dibble in your hand. Wha's the opposin candidate, heard ye, Andrew?" added Walter.

"I heard it was a Mr Blethermehooly o' Blaweary," replied Andrew.

"Oh, I hae heard o' the man before," said Walter—"a steeve haun at a speech—an unco gift o' the gab. He'll bother Sir Laurie, for he can speak him blin'. But, gang the business how it likes, it'll tak a gey queer turn if I dinna mak something o't."

At this moment, the bell of an adjoining room rung violently, and Walter hastened away to obey the summons, muttering, as he went—

"That's anither half-mutchkin dead."

We here avail ourselves of Walter's absence on the

business just alluded to—namely, to attend the customers in No. 3—to mention a circumstance which we hope will have the effect of disabusing our readers of any idea, if such they should have formed, of our being guided in our narrative by any political feeling or bias of any kind. The circumstance we allude to is the fact that our friend, Walter Cassils, was neither Whig, Tory, nor Radical. His political principles, if he could be said to have any at all, were as slippery as his moral—his own personal interest, to which he had always a sharp eye, comprehending the sum and substance of all his creeds concentrated—moral, political, and religious. He cared for nothing else, and would not give a single farthing for the success of any one party more than another, unless that success were calculated to further his own individual and private views.

Having given this explanation of our worthy friend's political principles, we trust that none of our readers, let them believe in what creed they may, will consider us as attempting either to uphold or to ridicule the party to which they belong.

Three days after that in which the conversation occurred, between Walter Cassils and his son, as above recorded, the little village of Castlerigg was thrown into great commotion by the entrance into its precincts of a carriage and four, driven at an unusually rapid rate; and greater still was the commotion excited by its drawing up at the door of Walter Cassils. People wondered what it could mean; but this wonder quickly subsided, on its being discovered that it was the carriage of Sir Lawrie Langlines.

They knew that Sir Lawrie was a candidate for the county—he had represented it in the two preceding parliaments; and they knew also that Walter Cassils had a vote; so, putting that and that together, they very quickly arrived at the truth; which truth, we need hardly say, we suppose, was, that Sir Lawrie had come to solicit the countenance of the publican. It was even so.

An instant after the carriage had drawn up at Walter's door, there stepped forth from the said carriage a tall, thin, gentlemanly-looking man, dressed in black, and wearing a white hat. It was Sir Lawrie Langlines. Sir Lawrie doffed his hat gracefully and politely to Mrs Cassils, who was standing at the door to receive him, her husband not being in the way at the moment.

"Hope I see you well, ma'am?" said Sir Lawrie, smiling graciously, and speaking in his blandest tones.

"Quite weel, I thank ye, sir," replied Walter's better half, curtseying genteelly. "I hope ye are quite weel yersel, Sir Lawrie?"

"Quite well, I thank you, my good lady," replied the kind-hearted knight; for such he was—a mild and benevolent man—greatly esteemed by all who knew him for his many amiable qualities. Nor was this esteem lessened, but, on the contrary, rather increased than otherwise, through the sympathy excited by some odd points in the character of the worthy baronet. Amongst these was a most treacherous memory, that often led him into the most awkward scrapes—a confusion of ideas, upon occasions, that produced no less untoward consequences. The truth is, and we may not conceal it, that the good knight was by no means a very bright, although a very worthy member of society. Always meaning well, he yet sometimes took very odd ways of conferring his favours; and, through an anxious desire to oblige everybody, frequently involved himself in the most awkward dilemmas. His oddities greatly amused his friends, although they loved him too well either to allow of these oddities being exposed more than was unavoidable, or of their making him aware of the entertainment they afforded themselves.

"Quite well, I thank you, my good lady," said the baronet, in reply to Mrs Cassils' inquiry after his health. "Is your guidman at home?"

"'Deed is he, sir. He's just in the garden; an, if ye'll be sae guid as stap in a minnit, Sir Lawrie, I'll send for him."

"Do, my good lady—do, if you please," said the good knight, stepping into the house, preceded by Mrs Cassils, who ushered him into her best apartment, and, after having dusted a chair with her apron, and seen her guest seated, hastened to the garden to summon her husband. She found him at work, delving a piece of ground—in which labour he was assisted by his hopeful son, Andrew.

"Guidman, come awa into the house directly!" said Mrs Cassils, in a state of great excitement. "Here's Sir Lawrie, wi' his coach an' pouthered flunkies, waitin to speak to ye. Noo's yer time, Watty!" continued the lady, who had been impressed by her husband with a proper notion of the true value of a vote—"Noo's yer time, Watty! If ye dinna mak a guid job o't for Andrew there"—who, by the way, was her favourite son, lout as he was—"ye're no wordy o' haein a vote; an', mind, Watty," she added, "ye hae gien twa already withoot gettin the valy o' a cabbage bled for them. A bonny-like thing, my word!"

"Let me alane for this time, guidwife," said Walter, with a look full of serious importance; and, at the same time, hurrying on his coat. "Your business is done for, Andrew," he added, turning to his son, who was, at the moment, leaning on his spade, and who acknowledged the gratifying intimation with a complaisant grin, but without saying a word in reply.

Having donned his upper garment, Walter now hastened towards the house; and, in a second after, was in the presence of Sir Lawrie, who graciously rose to receive him.

"Hoo are ye the day, Sir Lawrie? hoo are ye the day?" he said. in his usual loud and prompt way.

"Thank you, Mr Cassils—quite well," replied the Baronet. "I hope I see you well, my good friend."

"Ou ay! Canna compleen, Sir Lawrie—but beginnin to find that I haena sic a haud o' the grund as I used to hae. Gettin auld, Sir Lawrie—a complaint that's no easy cured."

"Rather difficult, indeed," replied the Baronet, smiling. Then, after a momentary pause—"I dare say, Mr Cassils you guess the purpose of my visit."

"The auld thing, I fancy, Sir Lawrie," replied Walter—"the bit vote."

"Exactly so," said the knight. "I hope, Mr Cassils I may reckon on your support, as usual."

"I hear yer gaun to be opposed this time, Sir Lawrie" replied Walter, taking no notice of the "hope" expressed by the Baronet.

"Yes," said the knight; "there's another candidate in the field; but I trust none of my old friends will desert me on that account."

"He's a clever, gentlemanly man, I'm tell't, and o sound principles," replied Walter, again evading the home-thrust of the Baronet, and speaking at a venture—with what motives we leave the reader to guess—of the qualifications of the opposing candidate, of whom he, in reality knew nothing. "But, I'll tell you what it is, Sir Lawrie," he continued—"I hae a lang slip o' a son that I wad like to do something for. Noo, to be plain wi' ye, Sir Lawrie, if ye'll help the chiel to a bit canny government-birth o' some kind or other, my vote's yours. That's the short an the lang o't."

"What like is the lad? and what has he been bred to?" inquired Sir Lawrie.

"Jenny!" shouted Walter to his better-half, who was, at the moment, in the kitchen, "sen' Anro here!" Then turning to his visiter—"He was bred to my ain trade, of—a gardener; but ye'll see him in twa minutes."

And, in two minutes, or perhaps less, Andrew entered the apartment, grinning like a hyena, and followed by his

mother, who came to back her husband's efforts in behalf of her beloved son.

"This is oor son, Andrew, sir," she said, looking at the uncouth figure of the youth with an air of maternal pride; "and, ye see, a strapping chiel he is, sir. Ye maun do something for him, Sir Lawrie; for he doesna tak that weel wi' the spade wark; and, as I hae aye thocht, and hae aye said, it's no his station o' life at a'—for the lad's yevidently cut oot for better things. He's weel leared; and wad be a credit, although I say't that shouldna say't, to ony profession."

Sir Lawrie looked at his proposed protegé, and was at a loss to discover anything, externally at any rate, to corroborate the complimentary evidence which had just been delivered in his favour. On this subject, however, he made no remark; but, smiling in his usual bland way, said, "that he would certainly have much pleasure in doing what he possibly could for the young man;" and, with the understanding implied in what we have already related, and subsequently yet more distinctly expressed by the different parties, (namely, that Walter Cassils would give Sir Lawrie his vote; and that, for the said vote, Sir Lawrie would procure an appointment under Government for his son—something in the customs or excise)—we say, with this understanding the interview between the candidate for the county and the worthy freeholder therein, terminated; Sir Lawrie proceeding on his canvass, and Walter, and his son, Andrew, returning to their work in the garden.

"Weel, that job's settled, ony way, I think," remarked the former to the latter, as he thrust his spade into the soil. "Your plant's in the grund, Andrew, and has naething ado noo but grow."

Andrew's habitual grin resolved itself into an audible *nicher*, as he replied—

"Feth! ye hae managed weel, faither. I hope it'll be something respectable, and worth lookin at."

"A gauger, at the very least, I expect," said the father; "or, maybe, some canny birth in the custom-house. They're the twa grand pasturages for the pet lambs o' members o' Parliament."

Leaving Walter Cassils and his son, for a time, to pursue their ordinary occupations, and to live in the hope of an early advancement taking place in the family, we will follow, for a season, the proceedings of Sir Lawrie Langlines, immediately subsequent to the interview just described.

About ten days after that event, Sir Lawrie, who had been returned for the county, set out for London, to enter on his Parliamentary duties. On his arrival in the city, the worthy Baronet had many things to do; but amongst the first he did was to take into consideration the promises he had made to several of his constituents, to procure situations for their sons; and amongst these was that which he had given to Walter Cassils.

Having refreshed his memory by a retrospective revision of these promises, and taken a bird's-eye view of their different natures, the worthy Baronet set vigorously to work; and, by dint of personal and political influence, had placed every one of his private pledges in a fair way of being redeemed. Until he had accomplished this, the good soul ran about, night and day, from one great man to another—from public office to public office. He took, in truth, not a moment's rest till he had secured, in the various quarters to which he applied, such promises as left him perfectly at ease with regard to his own. This accomplished, the worthy Baronet set himself down, greatly relieved in mind, and enjoying by anticipation the contentment which, he felt sure, his successful exertions would afford his constituents. All was right; everything in a fair train; and the desires of his friends were about to be gratified, and precisely in the way they wished. There was "no mistake." Was there not? We shall see. It would be rather odd if Sir Lawrie could go through a business so multifarious and complex as that just spoken of without committing some blunder. Perhaps so. Was there any, then? Let us return to Walter Cassils; and, again we say, we shall see.

"Nae word frae oor Member yet?" said Walter, one morning at breakfast, intending the remark for the general benefit of the members of the family assembled. This was about three weeks after Sir Lawrie had gone to London. "Nae word frae the Member yet? It's queer."

"He's surely gaun to do something grand for us," replied Mrs Cassils; "he's sae lang about it." Then, turning to her son, Andrew—"'Od! he'll be gaun to mak a lord o' ye, or a dook, or some awfu thing o' that kind, at the very least. Feth! ye'll haud up yer head then, Anro."

Andrew grinned his usual grin, and looked by no means ill pleased at the splendid prospects thus held out to him by his loving mother. He, however, said nothing. Now, as chance would have it, on this very day—that is, on the very day on which the above conversation took place—a formidable-looking letter, with a large, official seal on it, was presented by the postman to Mrs Walter Cassils—her husband, it being market day, being from home. Mrs Cassils received the letter, for which there was nothing to pay—it bearing to be "On His Majesty's service;" and, not doubting for a moment that it was the anxiously-looked-for appointment for her son, flew, in a state of great excitement, with it to the garden, where Andrew was, at the moment, employed in hoeing cabbage.

"Here, Anro, here it's at last!" she shouted, as she ran towards her son, with the letter held out at the full extent of her arm—"Here it's at last!"

Andrew threw down his hoe, stepped out from amongst the rows of cabbages he had been dressing, took the letter from his mother, opened it, and read—"Horse Guards, London." Yes, Horse Guards, London. Such was the locality whence the extraordinary document had emanated. Andrew read on; and, by the time he had finished, found that he was appointed a cornet of dragoons!

"God preserve us! what's this o't!" exclaimed his mother, standing aghast at the astounding intelligence. "A cornal o' dragoons! Wha wad hae thocht it? That *is* grand! Nae wonder it was sae lang o' coming. Feth, Anro, ye're up the brae noo!"

The mother and son now entered into a serious discussion on the subject of Andrew's military appointment—the said discussion being rendered necessary by a certain consideration that entered into the general relation of the case. This was a doubt in the minds of both parent and child whether Walter would consent to his son's becoming an officer of dragoons. They doubted it very much; yet it was one that mightily tickled themselves. The mother was delighted at the idea of her son's becoming a "great offisher," as she called it, and figuring in regimentals; and the son was no less gratified by the contemplation of the same captivating picture. But what was to be done? Walter might object; that was to be feared. On this subject, then, mother and son communed earnestly for a few seconds; and, at length, determined that the appointment should, in the meantime, be kept a secret from him, and be ultimately broken to him cautiously, in order to ascertain how he felt on the subject, before disclosing the entire facts of the case. There was, however, a serious difficulty in the way. The letter from the Horse Guards which announced Andrew's appointment, intimated also that he would, in a few days, hear from his commanding officer, who would inform him when and where he should join his regiment, and of other particulars necessary for him to know. Now, there was a danger of this second letter fall

ing into Walter's hands, and thus prematurely divulging the secret. There certainly was. But it could not be helped. There was no avoiding of it, excepting by keeping a sharp look-out for the post, and endeavouring to intercept the impending communication ; and on this mother and son resolved.

In a few days after this, the promised letter came ; and, as good luck would have it, fell into the hands of Andrew himself. On getting possession of the important document, Andrew thrust it into his pocket, hastened to the kitchen, where his mother was, and, with a look of grave importance, and a wag of his forefinger, summoned her out. She obeyed the signal.

"The letter, mother—I've gotten't!" said Andrew, in a low whisper ; and the two hastened into an adjoining apartment, and secured the door. This done, Andrew drew the letter from his pocket, opened it, and read :—

"*Chiltingdon, 20th July* 183–.

"Sir,—Being advised, by a communication from the Horse Guards, that you are appointed to a cornetcy in the —th dragoons, I request that you will join your regiment here within ten days of this date.

"By applying to any army-clothier, you may be furnished with the necessary uniform of our corps—cap, sword, &c. ; and I would recommend your providing yourself with these before joining. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

"Charles Medway,
"Lieut.-Col. —th Dragoons."

"Grand, Anro! grand!" exclaimed Mrs Cassils, delightedly. "Ye maun get the claes directly."

"'Deed maun I," said Andrew ; "but hoo are they to be gotten, withoot my faither's kennin a' aboot it ? They'll be awfu expensive, and whar am I to get the money, except frae him ?"

"Think ye, if we were buyin the cloth, Anro, that Wee Johnny couldna mak them ?" inquired his mother, referring to the little drunken tailor of the village of Castlerigg. "That wad be a great savin ; and ye ken he's a bit handy body, Johnny, when the drap drink's no in his head. He maks his arm flee like a weaver's shuttle."

"No, no, mother," replied Andrew ; "Johnny's weel aneuch at plain wark—at drivin up corduroys or velveteens—but he's nae haun at fal-de-rals. I maun go to a reglar tailor's. There's the swurd an' "——

"Wad yer faither's auld ane no do," here interposed Andrew's mother, bent on thrift, "an' it were weel scoored up ? It's a gey gaucy ane, I'm sure. It has a head on't like a creel ; and I'm tell't did a guid day's wark at Shirramuir."

"No, mother," said Andrew, decisively. "I maun go decent like, or no ava ; I maun hae every thing new and o' the richt kind."

"Weel, weel, Anro, my man, since it maun be sae, it maun be sae. But whar's the siller to come frae, unless your faither gies't ?"

"That's what I'm sayin, mother," replied Andrew ; "we maun tell him."

"I fancy we maun," said the former. "He'll maybe no tak just so ill on wi't as we're dreadin."

The proceeding here deemed necessary, was soon after adopted. Walter was informed of his son's appointment ; and, although he did express a good deal of surprise at it, he certainly did not "tak so ill on wi't" as his wife and son had feared. On the contrary, he seemed, on the whole, rather proud of it, and at once agreed to supply the needful for his son's outfit.

This important point settled, Andrew lost no time in providing himself with the necessary clothing, and other appurtenances of his new profession, amongst which was a sword nearly six feet in length, and a fur or bear-skin cap, of at least three in height.

On the evening on which his military dress was sent home, Andrew secretly retired with it to a private apartment ; and having there arrayed himself in the warlike toggery, girded on the long sword, and mounted the huge bear skin cap, he stalked into the kitchen, where was his mother, sisters, and one or two female servants. It was a triumphant moment for Andrew ; and his audience was of the very best description for a first debut.

When the martial figure of Andrew stalked into the kitchen, a scream of affected terror rose amongst the spectators. Andrew acknowledged it with a grin of delight. He had inspired terror and admiration, and both in about equal proportions. It was a most gratifying effect.

"Isna he as like the pictors o' the Duke o' Wellington as he can glowr ?" exclaimed the delighted mother

"I think he's mair like Blookar, in the three-ha penny picture books," said one of the admiring sisters.

Andrew smiled graciously at these flattering compliments, and endeavoured to look as deserving of them as possible.

"Did I frichten ye, mother ?" he now inquired of the latter, softening his looks at the same time, to shew that it was all a joke, and that he was not in reality so terrible as he looked like.

"'Deed did ye, laddie," replied his gratified parent. "Ye're just awfu in thae claes. That's a fearsome swurd." Andrew smiled again, and glanced complacently at the formidable weapon which had been just alluded to, and which clattered loudly on the stone floor with every motion he made—and he made a good many, on express purpose to produce this very warlike sound.

Having sufficiently exhibited himself in his military array, Andrew withdrew—his sword trailing after him with a noise that was heard, as he proceeded alongst the long stone-floored passage of the house, for several seconds after he himself became invisible, and resumed his wonted garments.

In the meantime, the period to which Andrew's commanding officer had limited him was fast drawing to a close. Seven of the ten days had expired. It was therefore necessary that Andrew should bestir himself. He did so, and was ready to start on the morning of the eighth day after the receipt of his Colonel's letter. Nay, Andrew was not only ready to start on this day, but actually did so ; and, on the forenoon of that which followed, was safely deposited—"long sword, saddle, bridle," and all—in the fashionable town of Chiltingdon.

Having brought our story up to this point, we will shift the scene for a moment to the barrack-yard of the place above-named ; and there we shall find a group of dragoon officers in undress, chatting and laughing away in the centre of the esplanade. All at once, the eyes of the party are directed towards the main gate of the barrack-yard. The talk ceases, and all look with eager and silent curiosity towards the entrance just spoken of. At length, a universal burst of laughter, which no sense of politeness could control, indicated that the object of attention was one of a ludicrous character. What there was in it of this nature, the reader will judge for himself when we inform him that the said object of attention was a tall, gaunt, uncouth-looking figure, in the uniform of the corps then occupying the horse-barracks of Chiltingdon. Everything was strange and odd about the unknown warrior. His clothes, somehow or other, did not seem to fit him ; and he evidently felt by no means at home in them himself. Vain were the conjectures which the officers of the —th made as to who this new comrade could be.

"Doesn't he look devilish like a scarecrow in regimentals ?" said one.

"What an abominable fit!" exclaimed another.

"Made by a country tailor," said a third.

"The devil a bit," remarked a fourth; "the clothes are not amiss made, but it's the infernal figure of the man. Stultz himself couldn't make that fellow look human."

At this moment, they were joined by the Colonel, whose attention was immediately directed by the party to the odd figure they were contemplating. The Colonel—who was a grave and staid elderly man, of much experience, and not given to laughing on trifling occasions, nor very ready in humouring the levities of his young officers—raised his glass to his eye, and looked for a second at the person to whom his notice had been called.

We must pause here for a moment, to explain how it was that time was afforded for so much conversation and remark, ere the subject of it had advanced the short distance that intervened between the barrack gate and the spot on which the officers of the —th stood. This is accounted for, by the circumstance of the stranger warrior's having condescendingly entered into conversation with the sentry at the gate, to whom he was putting sundry questions in a very friendly and familiar way. Leaving our hero—for we need no longer attempt to conceal that the personage of whom we speak was no other than our friend, Andrew Cassils—we return to the party in the centre of the esplanade.

"Ah!" said the Colonel, after contemplating Andrew for a few seconds—"Our new Cornet, I dare say. What does he stop at the gate for? This is our new Cornet, gentlemen," continued the Colonel, now addressing, in a grave tone, the young men by whom he was surrounded, "and represented to me to be a person of considerable attainments, and of gentlemanly manners and disposition. I therefore expect that you will receive him as such, and not conduct yourselves towards him with any unbecoming levity, whatever his peculiarities may be."

"But don't you think he is rather a rum-looking customer, Colonel?" inquired a young slip of nobility.

"I never judge of a man by his looks, sir," replied the Colonel. "A man doesn't require to be a dandy to be a good soldier. Many a brave fellow I have known, who would cut but a very indifferent figure in a ball room."

Silenced by this reproof, the young aristocrat said no more, while all the other officers looked as grave and respectful as they possibly could; but the trial was a severe one, and it became every moment more oppressive in consequence of the approach of Andrew, who, having finished his tête-à-tête with the sentinel, was now advancing towards the group in the sentre of the square. On his approach, the Colonel stepped out from the circle of officers, and, raising his cap, politely said—

"Cornet Cassils, I presume?"

"Quite richt, sir. 'Od, ye hae guessed it. Are ye Cornal Medway?"

"The same, at your service, sir," replied the polite Colonel, again bowing.

"Weel, I'm glad to see ye, sir," said Andrew, with a grin of satisfaction, and extending his hand to the Colonel, in order to corroborate his assertion by a friendly shake. "I'm real glad to see you. Yon was a freenly letter o' yours, Cornal; and ye see," he added, taking up one of the skirts of his coat, and glancing downwards, at the same moment, at his own figure, "that I hae attended punckwally till't, in the matter o' cleedin."

"Oh, so I see, sir," said the Colonel, with a look—a look which even his cautious and guarded disposition could not suppress—of ineffable surprise at the style of language in which he was addressed."

"I dinna fin' a'thegither easy in them, Cornal," continued Andrew; "but I fancy I'll get used to them belive."

To this remark the Colonel made no reply; but, turning half-round on his heel, introduced the new-comer to his officers as Cornet Cassils. They all raised their caps with an air of great politeness to the Cornet; but it was easy to see, by the peculiar smile that played on every countenance, that there was little of the real feeling of courtesy in the ceremony.

"I hope ye're a' weel, friens?" said Andrew, smiling graciously on his brother officers, and shaking them one after the other by the hand; going round the circle for that purpose. "I houp we'll be a' freenly thegither, and leeve just like brithers. Ye'll fin' me willin to obleege at a' times; for I like love an' unity in a' cases."

"So do we, sir," gravely replied a waggish young scamp who stood next Andrew. "Love and unity's our motto; and I'm delighted, and so, I'm sure, are my brother officers, to find you so deeply imbued with that beautiful sentiment. It is one which you seem calculated to illustrate as well as entertain."

"Thank ye, sir, thank ye for yer guid opinion. I houp ye'll never hae reason to change't."

"We mess at six o'clock, sir," here interposed the Colonel, turning on his heel, and walking away from the party.

"What's that the Colonel says?" inquired Andrew at one of the group with which he was still surrounded.

"The Colonel says we mess at six, sir; which is as much as to say he expects your presence at that hour."

"Mess! What kind o' a mess?" said Andrew. "Mess o' what?"

"It is dinner, sir, that is meant. We dine at six. Mess is regimental phrase for dinner."

"Ou ay," said the enlightened Cornet. "Very guid. Nae objection whatever to tak a chack o' dinner wi' the Cornal. I'll birl a bawbee wi' him wi' great pleasure Wull ony o' ye be there, chaps?" Andrew, seeing so many merry faces about him, was now getting familiar.

"Oh, surely, surely," was the reply. "We'll be all there, and most happy to meet you, Cornet. Good-by, Cornet, good-by, good-by," exclaimed the officers of the —th, one after the other, as they went off pair after pair—arm in arm, together.

We suppose we should pause here, to describe what each and all of these gentlemen thought of their new brother—how amazed, how astonished they were at the strange, uncouth appearance and manners of the Cornet; but we question much, whether the information conveyed by such description would compensate for its tedium. All this, then, we leave to the imagination of the reader, who will form a sufficiently correct notion of it without our interference. Having disposed, then, of this piece of dead weight, we shall proceed with our story, carrying our hero forward to the next important occurrence of the day, which was his appearance in the mess room of the —th.

"What a gran' turn oot!" exclaimed Andrew, on his entering the apartment, which was already half-filled with officers, and gazing in amazement with uplifted hands on the display of plate, crystal, &c., which the mess-table and side-board exhibited. "They wad need to hae the penny siller that come here, I think. What say ye, Cornal?"

The grave Colonel took no notice of either the querist or the query.

"Allow me the honour of providing you a seat, Cornet, and of taking my place beside you," said the young officer who had so much admired Andrew's sentiment about love and unity. "Allow me the honour of providing you a seat, Cornet, and of taking my place beside you," said the young man just alluded to; placing a chair for Andrew at table, at which the gentlemen were now seating themselves, and planting another beside it for his own accommodation.

"Thank you, sir," replied Andrew, accepting the proffered conveniency, and seating himself.

"Take soup, my friend?" inquired Lieutenant Harrington—for such was the name of the officer who had so particularly attached himself to the Cornet.

"What kin' o' stuff is't?" said the latter, peering into the tureen, and snuffing the aroma of its contents.

"Capital stuff, sir," replied Harrington. "Turtle soup."

"Never heard o't afore; but dinna care to try a ladle fu'. It smells weel, though it looks geyan queer."

"James," exclaimed Lieutenant Harrington, calling one of the serving men; "soup here, for Cornet Cassils."

A plate of the soup was instantly placed before him. Andrew commenced. He took one spoonful; but it was evident, from the contortions of countenance he made, that he could not proceed much farther; and this promise was not belied.

"Jamie!" he bawled out, throwing down his spoon with a manifest expression of disgust; "tak awa this plate, and bring me a mouthfu o' brandy; that stuff wad need it. Is there ony sheephead kail on the table? I wadna gie a spoonfu o' that for a tubfu o' your turkey soups."

The Cornet was assured there was no such thing at table, but was offered various other edibles in lieu of it—two or three of which he accepted, and finally succeeded in making a very fair dinner. During all this time—and, indeed, during the whole of the afternoon—Colonel Medway threw looks, from time to time, at the Cornet, which sufficiently shewed the extreme perplexity he was in to conceive what sort of a person he had got in his new officer. The Cornet's *peculiarities* were too much even for his liberality of allowance on the score of oddities. The Colonel, however, maintained his usual gravity during the whole scene, taking no share whatever in the merriment which Andrew's brusqueries were every moment exciting amongst the younger members of the party. The Colonel was, in short, all amazement at the extremely rude and uncultivated manners of his new Cornet, and not a little displeased that such a person should have obtained a commission in the —th.

This amazement and this displeasure, however, he, with his usual forbearance and nice sense of politeness, suppressed as much as he possibly could; but he retired much earlier than usual from the mess-table, partly in disgust with the manners of the Cornet, and partly to adopt a proceeding regarding that person, which he determined should not be delayed a moment. This was to address a letter to the commander-in-chief, on the subject of Andrew's appointment to a cornetcy in the —th.

"My long experience in the service, my Lord," said this document, "has taught me to place little store, either by the manners or personal appearance of men; for I have not found these by any means sure indications of character; but, my Lord, there is a point in these matters beyond which even my indifference cannot go. Without any desire whatever to see my officers exquisites, I do yet think that some degree of refinement is necessary, in a person holding a commission in his Majesty's service; and that, as he is thus associated with gentlemen, and holds himself the rank of one, there should be some little conformity between his manners and position." The writer then went on to describe the "unlicked cub" that had been sent to him, hinted that such appointments might bring discredit on the service, and concluded by inquiring if there was *no mistake* anywhere, in the nomination of Mr Cassils to a cornetcy in the —th; "for," said Colonel Medway, "although he may be a very good sort of a person in other respects, he is totally unfit for the situation in which circumstances have placed him."

This letter, which was rather confidential than official—Colonel Medway having an intimate personal acquaintance with the commander-in-chief—was duly dispatched, and as duly received by the personage to whom it was addressed. It was rather an unusual sort of communication, and demanded some delicacy of procedure. This the commander-in-chief felt, and he acted accordingly. He immediately dispatched a private note to the member of the Ministry through whose influence Sir Lawrie had obtained the appointment, giving him the substance of Colonel Medway's letter, and asking, in his turn, if there was *no mistake* in the matter. The minister, on receipt of the commander-in-chief's note, immediately addressed a card to Sir Lawrie, on the subject of the communication he had received; and he too, asked if there was *no mistake* in the business.

On receiving this letter, Sir Lawrie flew, in a state of great perplexity and distress, to his memorandum-book, tossed over the leaves in search of the entry which he had made on the subject of Andrew's appointment, and found, to the farther increase of his uneasiness, that it was perfectly possible that he might have made a mistake between the *two* Cassils; for there *were* two of that name amongst his constituents—a Mr Cassils of Greyside, a gentleman of extensive landed property—who had a son also of the name of Andrew, and who was the rightful owner of the cornetcy which the hero of our tale was at this moment enjoying—and the father of that very primitive sort of person. Sir Lawrie had just concluded, then, that he had in all probability committed some blunder with regard to the designation of the parties, which had led to a reversing of their appointments, and was musing on the perplexing subject, with his memorandum-book still open in his hand, when he was startled from his reverie, by some one rapping at the door of his apartment, in the Albion Hotel, where he was then lodging.

"Come in," called out Sir Lawrie.

The door opened, and in stalked a tall, gaunt figure, in military attire, with a grin of familiar recognition on his vacant countenance. Sir Lawrie stared in silent amazement at the warlike apparition.

"Ye dinna ken me, I'm thinkin, Sir Lawrie," said the grinning warrior. "Thae fal de rals," glancing at his appointments, "mak an unco change on a body's look."

"Really, sir—really," said the astonished knight, with the most perfect gravity and seriousness, "you have the advantage of me. I—I"—and he looked in the face of his visiter, as if puzzled with a recollection of having seen it somewhere before—"I have not the honour of knowing who addresses me."

"'Od, that's queer aneuch, now," replied the stranger; "but thae trantlums, as I said before, disguise a body sae. I'm Andrew Cassils, Sir Lawrie."

"Oh, God bless me!—dear me!" exclaimed the perplexed Baronet, taking his visiter good-naturedly by the hand. "I should have known you, certainly. Be seated—be seated, Mr Cassils."

When he had done so.

"By the by, I'm afraid—that is, I find," continued the worthy knight, "that I have committed some mistake with regard to your appointment, Mr Cassils. I'——

"Indeed, sir," here interposed the Cornet, "that's juist the business that I hae come up to London to see ye aboot."

And he produced a letter which he had received the day before from his father, in which the latter informed him that Mr Cassils, of Greyside, had called upon him, and had stated that an appointment in the excise had reached him for his son; that he had never desired such an appointment, having a very different view for the young man; and that he supposed that the situation was intended for his, namely, Walter's son. The letter concluded by desiring Andrew to wait immediately on Sir Lawrie in London, and learn from him how the matter really stood. It was,

then, in consequence of this letter, that Andrew was now a visiter of Sir Lawrie's; and, we need hardly add, that with this visit terminated the military career of the Cornet.

The saddles were shortly after put on the right horses; Andrew became an exciseman, and his namesake stepped into the Cornetcy, which the former had filled, although but for a short time, with such dignity and decorum.

THE TRIP.

The late Duke of Hamilton, with many excellent qualities, possessed some peculiarities of character better calculated, perhaps, to afford amusement than to support the dignity of his rank. He was fond of fun and frolic, and much delighted in specimens of good practical joking.

It was in this spirit that the merry Duke, on one occasion, invited his worthy ground-bailie, at Smerly Bay—a harbour in a certain island on the west coast—to dine on board his yacht, which was then lying in the bay above mentioned. Too proud of the honour to hesitate about accepting so flattering a mark of his Grace's favour, Mr Mathieson, who was a stout, elderly, little personage, with many becks, and bows, and "wreathed smiles," at once expressed his readiness to attend his Grace, at the time appointed, on board the Charlotte.

Punctual to his engagement, and dressed in his best, the worthy Bailie presented himself, in the hour of cause, on the little quay of Smerly Bay, where, agreeably to previous arrangement, he was to find the yacht's pinnace waiting to convey him on board. The boat, with two stout fellows in it, was there. The Bailie was shipped; and, after about a fifteen minutes' pull, found himself standing on the deck of the little Charlotte, to which he was welcomed by the Duke himself, and two or three waggish friends of his Grace, who were, at the time, on a tour with him, in the yacht, through some of the Western Isles.

As hospitable as facetious, the Duke lost no time in priming his humble friend, the Bailie, from a case-bottle of brandy, which he ordered to be brought on deck for that special purpose. Nothing loath, the honest man took a jorum or two of the stimulating liquor—just enough to put him in spirits, and to inspire him with the confidence necessary to an entire enjoyment of his present happy position.

By and by, the party—including, of course, the Bailie—were summoned to the cabin to dinner. It was an excellent one, and the guests were just the men to do it justice. The worthy Bailie, amongst the rest, played a capital knife and fork—a sort of thing in which he rather excelled at all times. Dinner over, drinking materials were produced, and the party set fairly in for a merry bout; and a merry bout they had. The Bailie cracked away like a pen-gun, and felt as happy as a man could do.

When the revels had thus continued for some time, the Duke, as if suddenly struck with a good thought, proposed, as it was a fine afternoon, they should get the yacht under way, and make a run as far as Campbelltown, which, being only, as his Grace said, about twenty miles distant, they would easily make out before nightfall—the wind being quite fair. To this proposal all, excepting the Bailie, at once acceded. But the Bailie demurred. He had matters of his Grace's to attend to, (he said,) that would by no means allow of his absence.

"Besides," continued the worthy man, "I couldna think o' gaun awa frae hame in this abrupt manner, and withoot giein my family some notice o' my proceedings. They wad think I was drowned."

"Bailie!" exclaimed the Duke, slapping him jocosely on the shoulder, "as to any neglect of my affairs which your absence might occasion, I give you a full quittance beforehand; and as to your abrupt departure alarming your family, I shall provide for that by sending the boat on shore to give them satisfactory information regarding the case. So, go you must, Bailie."

"Weel, weel, your Grace, on thae conditions; and since you insist on't, I'll offer nae mair objections. But I maun be back by the morn's nicht at farthest."

"I promise you shall," replied the Duke.

This matter adjusted, the party proceeded in their revels for some time, and then all in a great flow of spirits ascended the deck, to see the vessel getting under way.

This was a proceeding very soon accomplished; for the yacht was well manned. In a very few minutes her anchor was up, and her white canvass spread to the gale. It was blowing a fine fresh breeze, and the party, including Bailie Mathieson, had the satisfaction both of seeing and feeling the lively little craft bounding over the waves.

Our good friend the Bailie, who was, by this time, himself a little in the wind, stood with spectacles on nose—for his sight was very indifferent—looking with much interest at the receding shores of his native place. Gradually they disappeared from his view; amongst the last objects he saw being his own house, a very pretty little white one, that stood conspicuous on the high ground that overlooked the bay.

Having spent some time on deck in looking around them, the party, at the Duke's suggestion, again descended to the cabin, and again commenced their revels. These they now kept up to a late hour of the night, and until they could carry on no longer—at least, some of them; and amongst whom was our worthy friend the Bailie, who, in the joy of his heart, got so completely sewed up that he had to be carried to bed by the steward and the mate.

"Faith, man, but she's gaun through't cleverly!" said the Bailie, in very thick, and all but unintelligible English, to his bearers, as they pitched him into his bed; the remark being elicited by a sudden plunge of the vessel, and the gurgling noise of the water on the outer wall of his sleeping berth. "We'll be in Campbelltown in the twinklin o' a bed-post, an' we carry on at this rate," he added at the same time turning himself round in his bed, and settling himself for a luxurious snooze. In half a minute after, a loud snoring from the Bailie's berth announced that all was well, and that the worthy man was now oblivious of all earthly concerns.

Leaving the Bailie thus comfortably disposed of, we shall ascend the deck, and see how the little Charlotte is getting on. Had the reader been there, and been unaware of what was going forward, he would have been a little surprised to find that the Duke's yacht, in place of holding on her course for Campbelltown, was scudding right back again for Smerly Bay.

This was the case, then; and therein lay a certain practical joke, which the merry Duke and his friends purposed playing off on the worthy Bailie. Their joke was to carry the unconscious voyageur back to the precise spot from whence they had taken him; and, as they hoped, to enjoy some amusement from his mistaking his locality when he should get on deck in the morning—a design in which they calculated on being favoured by his short-sightedness, and by the confusion of head which the night's debauch must occasion.

In furtherance of this plot, the vessel had been put about the moment the Bailie was put to bed, and hence came it that she was now retracing her way. Long ere daylight, the Charlotte was again at anchor, and in precisely the same spot from which she had departed some three or four hours before.

On awaking in the morning, the first thing the worthy Bailie did was to raise himself up in the bed, the next to thrust his head, garnished with a red cowl, out of the narrow crib, to listen for sounds that might convey to him some

idea of what the vessel was aoout—whether sailing, or at anchor. All was still. There was no sound but the listless tramping of two or three feet on deck, and no motion whatever. The vessel, then, the Bailie concluded, was at anchor. She was in Campbelltown harbour.

Under this impression, the worthy man got up; and, in his curiosity to see the place—having never been there before—hurried on deck in his shirt and trousers.

"Hech! a bonny place," exclaimed the Bailie, scanning the scenery around him, and shewing clearly that the night's sleep he had got had not altogether overcome the effects of the prior evening's potations.

"Is it not, Bailie?" said the Duke, who at this moment joined his worthy officer on deck.

"Just as bonny a place, your Grace, as I hae seen," repeated the Bailie, still continuing his delighted survey of the shore. "There's a bit white house there on the hill," went on the Bailie, pointing to his own domicile; "that maun be a bit pleasant place to leeve in."

"Why, your own, Bailie, is, I think, just as good. It is as well situated, and looks as well," said the Duke.

"Ou, 'deed is't, your Grace," replied the Bailie; "but that seems fully a mair roomy-lookin house than mine, and stauns a hantle higher; but there's a wunnerfu likeness between them, after a'. Most astonishin."

"Yes; I think there is a sort of resemblance," said the Duke; "but not a very striking one."

"Deil o' me, beggin your Grace's pardon," said the Bailie, who had now taken a more comprehensive survey of the land around him, "if I ever saw twa places so like as this and Smerly! There's a hill precisely whar we hae ane, and o' the very same shape; and there's anither just whar Ben Moran stauns; and there's a water exactly whar we hae ane; and, Gude's my life! there's twa houses staunin exactly whar our minister's and the doctor's staun. 'Od, its amazin!"

"The resemblance of the two places has been often remarked," said the Duke, carelessly; "and I do think there are two or three points in which they have a distant likeness to each other."

At this moment, the steward announced breakfast on the table, when the Duke and his officer—the latter having previously despatched one of the men for his coat and waistcoat—descended to the cabin, where the rest of the party were now assembled, none of them having yet been on deck.

A wink from the Duke intimated to them that the Bailie had bitten, and was under the desired illusion. Taking the hint—"Well, Bailie, what think you of Campbelltown?" said one of the gentlemen. "Isn't it a pretty place?"

"Very bonny place, sir; very bonny place," replied the Bailie.

"Have you observed its resemblance to Smerly, Bailie?" said another.

"Indeed have I, sir," replied the latter; "I was just remarkin't to his Grace. It's just uncommon the likeness."

Breakfast over, it was proposed that the party should go on shore for an hour or two. The proposal was agreeable to all; and accordingly on shore they went, or at least, towards it—for we must not land them until we have mentioned that, ere they quite reached their landingplace, the Bailie was surprised by another extraordinary point of resemblance between his new quarters and his old. This was the astonishing likeness of the two little quays. They appeared perfect counterparts of each other, and the Bailie said so.

"Never saw ony twa things sae like in my life," he said. "They maun hae been built by the same man, after the same plan, at the same time, and o' the same materials; for deil a grain o' difference is between them that I can see. It's really queer."

"Chance coincidences, my good friend," said the Duke, in a tone of indifference; "but I certainly agree with you in thinking that there *is* a very odd correspondence between the two quays."

The boat having reached the quay, the party landed. There was only one solitary person on it at the time; but this person happened to be an intimate friend of the Bailie's The latter on coming near, very near him—for he could not discern any but large objects at a distance of a score of yards—at once recognised him, and, advancing towards him with extended hands—

"God bless me, Mr Tamson, are *you* here too? What in a' the world's brought ye here, and whan did ye come?"

Mr Thomson looked at his friend, the Bailie, with an expression of the utmost surprise; while the Duke and his friends—unable to restrain their mirth at the oddity of the scene, and yet desirous of concealing it—kept at a little distance, one after the other turning round every instant to give way to those bursts of laughter which they could not control. Attracted by this additional perplexing circumstance, Mr Thomson continued for some seconds to look from the Bailie to the Duke and his party, and again from the latter to the former, without answering his friend's query. At length—

"What do ye mean, Bailie?" he said, with a look of undiminished surprise. "Whan cam I here, and what's brocht me here! What is't ye mean? Thae's funny questions to put to a man that's at hame." It was now the Bailie's turn to be puzzled.

"Whan did this become your hame, Mr Tamson?" said the Bailie with a smile of great perplexity. "Ye hae shifted your camp unco quickly. It's no four-and-twenty hours since I left ye in a different place, that I aye understood was your hame."

"Ye're for bein' jokey this morning, Bailie," said Mr Thomson, somewhat angrily, and pushing past his friend, without saying another word, believing himself to be the butt of some jest which he could not understand. The Bailie looked after him in great perplexity and amazement; but, at length, came to the conclusion that his friend's intellect must have had a shake from some deranging cause or other; and it crossed the Bailie's compassionate mind that it would be well done to have the unfortunate man seized and carried *home* to his friends in the Duke's yacht. This, on reflection, however, appearing rather a violent proceeding, he abandoned the idea.

As it would be tedious to both reader and writer to repeat the subsequent illusory experiences of the worthy Bailie, seeing that they were all nearly the same in detail, suffice it to say, in conclusion, that the honest man now met several friends, one after the other; and that their manner towards him, on his expressing his surprise at seeing them—a surprise that greatly increased with every additional friend he met—very nearly convinced him of two things—that all his acquaintance had gone mad, and had all, by some unaccountable unanimity of purpose, come to Campbelltown.

In short, it was not until the Duke and his party had enjoyed a series of scenes with the worthy Bailie of the most ludicrous character, and until a series of circumstances which he could not possibly mistake, had forced themselves on his notice, that he became aware of the trick that had been played upon him.

WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE BEGGAR'S CAMP.

I RECUR again to the strange adventures of Sergeant Square, and present another section of them to the readers of the Border Tales.

With ruined prospects, and friendships severed by death, (he began,) I resolved to bid, once more, farewell to my native Edinburgh.

I passed two or three days in this listless manner, each being to see me put in force my resolution to depart; till, at length, having provided myself with a seaman's dress, taken the powder out of my hair, seized a stout stick, and provided a small bundle of necessaries, I once more set out upon the the world, caring little whether I went to the south or the west, to London or Bristol, to Greenock or Port-Glasgow. I had, in my absent state of mind, almost unconsciously, or perhaps from habit, taken my way down the Canongate, and had reached the girth cross—a few steps, and the streets of Edinburgh would pass from under my feet, perhaps for ever. I neither knew nor cared. A flood of painful recollections came over me, as I stood scarce knowing for what object I had paused. So doubtful and indifferent, so undecided did I stand, that, to put an end to the recollections that pained me whilst I hesitated, I took a piece of copper from my pocket, and, tossing it up into the air, I cried, "A head for England—a lady for Scotland!" The halfpenny tingled at my feet, the King's head looked to the sky, and, as if relieved of a care, I moved quickly on, nor once looked behind until I had placed Arthur's Seat between me and the city.

Thus moving along, sometimes listlessly, at others quickening my pace, I had journeyed on until I had reached the neighbourhood of Berwick. The day had been overcast with partial light showers; several times I had resolved to stay for the remainder of the day and night in the next inn I came to; but, enticed by partial clearings up of the weather, I still walked on, until towards sunset, when the weather, all at once, put on the most threatening aspect, and the rain fell very heavily. There was neither house nor shelter of any kind in sight; the thick dense clouds that came driving from the west completely obscured the twilight I had calculated upon. At length I perceived, at a small distance from the road, a house, with light issuing from the windows. I knocked for admittance, which was at once cheerfully given, and every exertion made for my comfort by the kind host and hostess—a farmer and his wife. To my inquiries if they could oblige me with a bed for the night—

"You are kindly welcome to the shelter of our roof," said the farmer, "and a seat by the fire; and, were it not for a strange circumstance, you might have both a room and a bed."

"William, William!" said the wife, with a look of great alarm, "do not speak of it; I could not think of even putting a dog there, far less a Christian. I will give the stranger a pair of blankets, and make a good fire for him; but do not speak of that fearful room. I wish the laird would allow us to pull it down."

"Grace, my woman," replied he, "I did not mean him to pass the night in it. I only, without thinking any harm, mentioned it. I wish, as well as you, that it were taken down."

Struck by their strange discourse, I requested my kind host to tell me the history of the apartment that seemed to give them so much uneasiness.

Drawing his seat more near to the fire—"I have not the smallest objection," said he, "as it will shew, whatever is the cause of the strange disturbances, that there is no blame on our part. This bit land that I farm has been in our family for more than two nineteen years, and the third nineteen of the lease is nearly expired. Both the old and present lairds have been good landlords to us—we could not well refuse any small favour they required at our hands; and, indeed, we always found ourselves the gainers for any little that was in our power. A few months after the rebels were defeated, and the Rebellion quelled by the battle of Culloden, the young laird came back to the big house again safe, and we all rejoiced. On the day after his arrival, he came to our house to visit us, for he was always like one of ourselves. I saw there was something upon his mind, he was so douce and thoughtful—not in the least like his former way, which was all laughing and chatting with every one. It did not become me to inquire the cause; so, after staying a short time, he requested me to come out and take a turn with him, to see some young trees that had been planted before he joined the King's army. As soon as we were a short distance from the house, he stopped, and, looking me full in the face—

'William,' said he, 'I believe you would not do anything to harm or bring me into trouble.'

I think my face flushed, for I found my ears glow at the supposition.

'No, laird; I would far rather harm or bring myself into trouble. Who has belied me to your Honour? I am certain neither thought nor word of mine ever gave you cause to suspect me.'

I really felt hurt and grieved for a moment, until he took my hand in his, and smiled.

'William,' said he, 'I am sorry if I have unintentionally hurt your honest feelings. I have nothing but good faith in you. I have an affair of importance on hand, and you must aid me.'

'With all my heart,' replied I. 'Only tell me what I am to do?'

'There is one for whose safety I am most anxious,' continued he; 'his life is in danger. In my own house he cannot be concealed; in yours he may. I shall provide for it, if you are willing to encounter the risk and inconvenience. You have no family or servants that reside with you. I shall build an apartment attached to your house, which he shall occupy; and you will attend to all his wants, and administer to his comforts as much as in your power.'

To all this, Grace and I gave our hearty consent. Everything was made ready in much less time than I could have conceived possible; the laird superintending all himself, and we obedient to his will. When all was to his mind, he went from home for a few days, leaving word with me, that whoever should give me his letter, authorizing me to

put them in possession of the room, I was at once to comply, and ask no questions.

For those who had taken any part with the Prince, it was a troublesome period. The cruelties committed by the King's troops in the Highlands, made our blood run cold in our veins; and we now pitied those whom we had a few months before hated and feared. Numbers were in prison, waiting a bloody release, more objects of pity than those who were butchered outright. The law sometimes realizes the tales of the crocodiles, and weeps over the victims it is intent to devour. Well, the second evening after the Laird left us, there came to our door a poor, aged man, scarcely able to support himself upon his staff; his keen, grey eyes were at one time fixed upon the ground, and the next, when he looked up, piercing into my inmost thoughts. With a tone of voice which affected humility, he requested rest and a little food. There was a round fulness in the subdued tone, that ill assorted with the apparent age of the individual; yet I welcomed him into the house—for the needy never left our door empty. When he was seated, I saw his searching eye scan the apartment. Grace was seated at her wheel, while I had been reading to her the "Pilgrim's Progress," and the book lay on the table. The first words he spoke, were to inquire if there were any other inmates in the house except ourselves. When I answered him that there was not, he stretched his body erect, as he sat on his chair. I could scarce believe my eyes. Grace gave a faint cry of surprise and fear. I looked to the gun that hung over the mantlepiece—for that he was a robber in disguise, was my first impression. It lasted, however, only for a moment; for, taking a letter from his pocket, he gave it to me. It was the promised letter from the Laird; and so, taking the candle from the table, I requested him to follow me. He rose from the seat, and, clothed as he was in his beggar's weeds, I seldom had seen a more majestic figure, as he passed into the little apartment. Without uttering a word, he threw himself upon a seat, and motioned me to retire. I felt awed by his presence, and withdrew, shutting the door after me, and leaving him to his meditations. Grace prepared some supper for him; and, tapping on the door, inquired if he would partake of it. He replied no; and begged not to be disturbed until he called in the morning.

Wondering at what we had seen, and who our guest could be, we retired to rest. I could hear at times the stranger groan heavily; and Grace, who slept little through the night, said she believed he had never lain down, for she had heard him at times walking and sighing heavily. Yet, afterwards, we had more to wonder at. For many weeks, he never allowed any of us to enter his room. At night only, he would walk forth, after we were in bed. His food was handed in to him at the door. I never saw him, neither did Grace; for he only exposed his hands, and part of his arms, when he took anything from her at the door. At first we felt very curious, and formed many conjectures who he could be; but, as the Laird still remained in Edinburgh, we could learn nothing. Gradually, we became accustomed to all his humours, and thought little of them. Our few neighbours seldom visited us, and they never suspected there was any person except ourselves in the house. His taciturn and secluded manner at length wore off. Grace first was admitted to his apartment, then myself. Previous to this, a large trunk of books and necessaries, along with a letter to me, arrived at the Big House. I was to get the whole conveyed here in the best manner I could, for "the gentleman," as we called him, which I immediately set about. From this time he became an altered man. The almost misanthropical turn he had shewn entirely left him; a shade of touching sadness overcast his countenance; and it appeared to me that his grey locks seemed more bleached by care than time; for his voice was full and melodious, and his face unmarked by a wrinkle.

The executions at Carlisle, and the beheading scenes at Tower Hill, had been over for some time before the change of which I speak took place. Pleasing as it was to us, another source of discomfort, and a far more trying one, was discovered. He was a rank Papist!—an idolater!—a worshipper of painted and graven images! Judge you what we two Covenanted adherents of the Church of Scotland, in all her purity, felt, to have a part of our roof turned into a temple of Dagon. We were sore beset. What to do, we knew not. If the Laird had been at home, our duty was plain before us—to demand back my pledge, which I never meant should shelter the enemies of truth, or convert my house into the abode of idolatry, to the risk of the salvation of our precious souls. But I knew not where to find him; and, besides, much as I detested our guest's mode of worshipping, I could not divest myself of a secret love for him—he was so condescending, so grand, yet so humble and polite in all he did; and I could not say there was anything amiss in his conduct, save the way in which he had decorated his lonely apartment. Grace there, was not half so much perplexed as I was. 'Poor gentleman,' she said, 'if he is pleased, it would be wrong in us to find fault. I have nae doubt he is a poor, misled, ignorant Papist, and wish from my heart he was as well informed as we are; but, if he thinks he is right, we may pity, but I wadna distress him. We must set a good example, and pray for his enlightenment night and morning.'

I yielded to what she said, partly because I had an affection for him, and partly because I agreed in her sentiments; yet I never entered the idolatrous scene without feeling a shudder come over me. Upon the top of his little table stood a crucifix and an open book, by the side of which lay a string of beads. At the foot of his bed there was a picture of Jesus on the Cross; and upon his breast he wore another, which I often saw him take out and kiss, with his face raised to heaven, in an expression of joy and hope, while the tears stole down his face. Yet I could never think he had peace in his faith; for he was always attempting something to secure his eternal happiness—night after night flogging his bare shoulders—week after week tasting only bread and water—on Friday refusing flesh or fowl—and, in the spring of the year, living for weeks on eggs, bread, or milk. Surely, thought I, if the Papists are Christians, they do not feel the faith in Jesus that a true Christian enjoys; for this worshipper obeys the traditions and commands of men more than the word of God. I often wished to expound the truth to him; but we never, in all our converse, entered upon matters of faith. I worshipped with Grace, as my fathers had done, by ourselves, and he in his room, in perfect harmony. Yet, if strictness of walk and self-denial be accounted holiness, he was far more holy than we; for, though his mind was not so much at ease in his faith, his yoke appeared grievous, and his burden heavy; and new penances, as he called them, were proofs of his ever coming short in his own estimation of his attainable object. Poor gentleman! he fell a victim to his own endeavours to attain peace of mind by his austerities. He would have been a bright and a shining light, had he only been brought up in the truth, as Grace and I had been. But I am growing tedious, and wandering from the subject. To be short, his life continued to be what I have described. We continued to love him as a father; and poor Colin" (pointing to an old dog that lay at our feet) "was his friend and constant companion. No one, save the Laird, Grace, and myself, knew he was in our house; and, after two or three years, the Laird called upon him often, and passed a few hours with him; but he seemed to feel pleasure only when alone, and engaged in his superstitious devotions. About twelve months since, he began evidently to decline in health; and the Laird wished to remove him to the Big House, and procure medical attention; but this he would not hear mentioned.

'I have vowed,' said he, 'to the Virgin, never to leave this place alive; but, if you will send to Edinburgh, and get me a priest of our Holy Faith, that I may receive the last rights and consolations of the True Church, my soul will thank you and depart in peace—you, my friend, know whom. If possible, I would wish you to learn if he is still alive; he will not refuse to come.'

In a few days after, a stranger came to our door, and gave me a letter for the strange gentleman. I had not seen him for several days, Grace being his sole attendant; and even she dared not interrupt him but as little as possible. I was shocked at the change I saw upon him. He lay, pale and exhausted, his eyes bent on the crucifix, and his thin, wasted hands, clasped upon his bosom, as if he had been entranced. The sickly light of the wax candle that burned beside the crucifix, cast a strange light upon the dead-like body before me. I started back and looked aghast. The noise of my entrance had aroused him.

'What want you, William?' he inquired, in a hollow voice.

'It is a letter for you, sir,' said I, 'brought by a stranger, whom the Laird said I might admit.'

A glow of pleasure passed over his face, as, with an effort, he raised himself, and took the letter from my hand.

'Blessed Jesus!' he said, 'my prayers are heard! Admit him. He brings me peace and salvation through the Church. My penitence and penances have prevailed.'

After the stranger, who was a Papist priest, was admitted, they remained alone until our guest died, which was on the second day after. He was buried by the Laird. What or who he was, we never knew. All his books and papers were taken away; but the consequences of his residence still remain, as a punishment for harbouring a Papist, and suffering idolatry under our roof. The room he possessed and died in is, we are certain, disturbed by a spirit. We hear the door open and shut at night, and strange noises startle us from our rest. Two visiters, one after the other, who attempted to sleep in it, were terrified almost out of their senses; and it is for this reason we could not offer it to you to sleep in."

My curiosity was as much awakened by the vague account the good people gave me of the room in its present state, as my interest had been excited by the account of the poor outlaw. I am, I confess, not more brave than other people. I never courted danger for the love of it, or fled from it to meet dishonour; and, as for the reality of spectres, I neither believe nor disbelieve in them; having, in all my travels, never seen a legitimate one, nor troubled my head about them. As much through curiosity, I believe, as anything else—for I am sure it was not the love of a good bed, far less an adventure—I told my hosts I would with pleasure sleep in the room, if they would allow me; and, after some honest endeavours to dissuade me, they consented. Supper and family-worship being finished, we all three entered the apartment—the good woman insisting upon our company while she prepared my bed, and her husband going more cheerfully when I proposed to accompany them. All the little duties were done by the dame in a hurried, timid manner; and, while she was occupied, I looked round. The door was only fastened by a wooden latch, which opened by a string hung upon the outside. The whole interior had a simple, clean, neat look, which pleased me. After a hasty good-night and God be with you, they withdrew When I was left alone, the account I had just heard of the strange individual who had, for so long a period, inhabited the apartment, passed over my mind; and who or what he could be, gave rise to many a conjecture. I became low-spirited at the thought of the many miseries that human nature is liable to, under reverses of fortune from which neither birth nor riches can protect us. In this frame of mind I retired to rest—the idea of anything supernatural never entering my mind, and no shade of fear discomposing my thoughts. I soon fell asleep. How long I had slept I know not; but I was awakened by a slight noise at the door of the room, as if some one had put their hand upon it. I now felt alarmed, and expected to witness some fearful sight. The door opened and shut with a faint clang. I heard a movement on the floor. A cold sweat came over me. I raised myself upon my elbow. All was dark—impenetrably dark, and I saw nothing; but the curtains at the foot of the bed shook violently.

"Who is there?" I attempted to inquire; but only a faint murmur escaped my lips.

A strange noise and movement on the floor again took place, and I bolted up and sat in the bed. The curtains again moved at the head; and, as I thought, were partially opened. Still nothing was to be seen, and I put forth my hand to grope. Something as cold as death touched it. This was more than I could endure. I sunk upon the bed, buried my head in the clothes, and would have cried out; but that terror had paralyzed every faculty. Whatever was the cause of my alarm, I now found that the object had come into the bed, and was either seated or lying between me and the wall. I dared not uncover my head, or put out my hands to ascertain what it might be. The icy feeling still thrilled through my frame; and thus I lay in mortal agony, under the conviction that the object still reclined immovable by my side. My firmness gradually began to return; and, with it, came calm reflection. I thought I heard a heavy breathing; and slowly uncovered my head to hear it better. Once more I summoned a desperate resolution to put forth my hand. What did my hand encounter?—the shaggy coat of a dog. A gentle whine followed; the next moment my hand was licked by a warm tongue. I smiled at my late alarm. It was Colin.

Soon after daybreak I was awakened by my host, who came to inquire how I had passed the night. He was agreeably surprised to find me safe and well. To his inquiries, I related the adventure of the night, without concealing my fears, and the chance there was of my having added one more testimony to the evil report of his apartment. The gratitude of the good people was extreme. They overwhelmed me with their thanks. They said I had rendered them a service they could not sufficiently repay. I had removed a cause of dread which had cast a gloom over their minds for many months; and, continued William—

"How silly it was in me not to know or think that it might be Colin!—for both the people who fled the room in terror, gave the same account of the early part of the adventure. Colin, poor thing," he said, as he patted the head of the dog, "you little knew the evil you did your master and mistress. You and he that is gone were dear friends and inseparable companions. No Christian could have shewn more concern at his death. You never came out from beneath his bed while the body lay on it; and, when he was carried out, Grace had to hold you, to prevent your snapping at the company as they bore him away. For long you visited his grave, and sat for hours upon it. It is the remembrance of your old friend that makes you still visit his room when all is quiet at night. He that is now 'where the Lord will,' taught you to take the string in your mouth and pull the latch, that, always welcome, you might enter when you chose."

During this address to the dog, he looked wistfully in the face of his master, as if he comprehended all that was said. The weather having now cleared up, the morning was beautiful. After breakfast, I bade adieu to my kind hosts, with a promise that if I ever passed that way I should make their house my home, and sleep in the room I had freed from its evil name.

As I moved cheerfully along the road, chanting some

snatch of a song to keep up my spirits, my ears were assailed, at a sudden bend of the road, by a rough voice.

" Hollo, messmate, cast here a few coppers to help to revictual a hulk all the doctors in the world could not refit for sea !"

Turning my eyes to the road-side, I saw, seated upon a bank, two strange objects—a stout young man, in a tattered seaman's dress, with one arm off by the shoulder and the other by the elbow, and a young, good-looking, but tattered female by his side. In a moment my hand was in my pocket, and, drawing near to them, the female rose and held out her palm in dumb show.

" Not so fast, young woman," said I, as I was putting a half-crown into his vest pocket ; " it is for Jack."

" Bless your Honour," said he, " its all one. That there young one is my wife ; poor thing, she was struck dumb in real earnest, when she saw me come home to her thus maimed. Bless her pretty face, she did not forsake poor Bill for all that."

While he spoke, a strong feeling came upon me that I had seen his face before ; but when or where, I could not call to mind. As I stood gazing into his face, he looked as scrutinizingly at me.

" Were you ever in the East Indies ?" inquired I.

" To be sure I was. In that place I lost my precious limbs," replied he.

" Then you must be Bill Kay, whom Captain H—— and I left at Bombay," said I.

" And you are Jack Square," said he. " Give me your hand, old shipmate." And he held up the stump to me, and burst out a-laughing as I shook the sleeve.

The female gave him an angry look, with so much more of meaning than anger, that I thought she knew all we said.

" Come, Betsy, don't be sulky," said he ; " I wish to have a bit of a talk with my old mate. Come, be a good girl, and let us go back to Berwick. Jack Square, you will not be ashamed to walk home with us ?"

The wife nodded a consent, and away we trudged to the town, from which we were only a small distance.

During our walk, I told him that I was on my way to London to look out for a vessel to India, as my fortune had been adverse in Scotland ; and I was sick of the land, and careless what became of me.

" Never strike to an enemy, or quit the pumps while your vessel can float," cried he. " There are many ways of leading a jovial life. You were always my friend, and a good fellow. Give me your word, Jack, you will either stay and join us, or pass on and do us no harm, and I will have no secrets with you. Speak the word."

" I know not what you mean," I replied ; " as for joining you, I do not think, in the meantime, I shall, until I know better about it ; and as for hurting you or doing any harm, I give you my sincere assurance I will not, however much I might gain by it."

" Betsy, my dear," said he, " we are not going to the kenn ; we will go home. I wish to entertain my old friend."

We then altered our direction, and, after proceeding down a dark and dirty lane, entered a neat and well furnished room. As soon as we entered and the door was shut—

" Betsy," said he, " there is no use for gammon now ; find your tongue lass, and help me to find my arms."

" As you please, Billy," said the dumb wife. And both retired to another apartment, from whence they soon returned—she well dressed, and Bill as perfect in every limb as when we had parted, he to remain in India, and I to return home.

I believe he had told her his intention and who I was, in the time they were away ; for, seeing my surprise, he laughed aloud, while she, smiling, took me by the hand and welcomed me to their house. Now that her begging disguise was thrown off, she really was a most bewitching girl, of the gipsy cast—brilliant black eyes and hair—her features regular, almost to perfection—the loveliest brunette I had ever seen. Bill smiled good-naturedly at the admiration my looks expressed, as I gazed at her ; and, slapping me on the shoulder—

" Square," said he, " is she not a beauty ? You must not fall in love with her if you stay—that I must make a condition."

We all laughed.

I said, if I fell in love, I could not help it ; the fault was his for bringing me into temptation. A large square bottle of brandy and a jug of water were set on the table ; and while the wife was busy preparing dinner, Bill gave me the following account of himself :—

" You know, Jack, I am no scholar," he began ; " only a pretty good seaman, as far as hand, reef, or steering goes ; so I soon found India was no place for me, in a regular country ship. I could not abide these black, lazy, cowardly rascals of lascars ; and there was crowds of them in all the vessels I could find. They are well enough in fair weather ; but when it blows, the heart is blown out of them. They are either in the way, or skulking in corners ; so I took the first opportunity of returning home to Britain again. When I came to London, I got into all manner of mischief, and lost my guineas like winking, above two hundred in one week ; and the remainder, clothes and all, in one night in Wapping ; for I awoke in the morning in the watch-house, bruised, and with only a watchman's greatcoat thrown over me. I had been thrown out of a window, or pushed down some stair, and in that state they told me I was found by the watchman. I had now time to reflect, but nothing to reflect upon, for all I had in the world was a shirt and a pair of trowsers. There was no charge against me, so I walked from the watch-house like a man adrift in an old boat, without oars or food. I went to the wharfs, for pity or employ. I got fitted in a kind of way ; but could not find a vessel, for there were too many like myself. What to do I knew not. More than once I thought of doing as I had been done by—that is, helping myself where I could ; but, although I was often without food, and slept in the streets or under a boat, I, somehow, could not bring my mind to that. I often wished I was again in Scotland, where I had friends and was known ; but how to get there I knew not. At length the thought came into my mind—I could beg my way down. I could be no worse than I was in London—and where was the odds ? A beggar in London was no better than a beggar in Scotland, or anywhere else ; for my Scotch pride was by this time starved out of me ; so off I set ; but was poorly enough off, for I was not then up to the trade, so my stout look and honest truth met nothing but unkindness and insult. At length, one day, as I was on the point of dying from starvation, (for England is not a country for an honest beggar,) I fell upon a gang of gipsies, upon the borders of a heath, making merry. I joined them, and was kindly and hospitably received. Betsy there was one of the troop. From the moment I saw her, I took a fancy to her pretty face—joined the gang for her sake, and soon won her regard and love. I was now content and happy. We had victuals of the best in plenty, and roamed where we pleased, with no restraint but our own wills. I found there was some tough work before my hand. Betsy had one or two pretenders to her love, in her own and other gangs, and my rivals were not to be lightly thought of, for in their minds none but the brave deserve the fair. It is, win your bride and keep her while you can. There was one stout, active fellow, whom her parents intended for her husband ; but Betsy had no wish for the match, and my arrival confirmed her dislike to him. Our loves were only known to ourselves, and our interviews stolen, until my services had gained me the esteem of her father. He was patriarch or head of the

gang, and kept the common stock, guiding our movements and directing our operations as far as our wayward fancies could be guided—partly by argument, partly by yielding, but seldom by resorting to punishment, for all was done for our good, to the best of his judgment. No one thought of resisting his control; and if any became discontented, they left the gang—a step by no means desirable, for our safety lay in the strength of the gang. There is scarce a gang but is at feud with some other gang or gangs; and when they meet, nothing but the flight of the weaker, or some other overruling cause, prevents a battle, in which murders are not unfrequently committed.

Under the tuition of Betsy, I became a most expert beggar, as you witnessed this morning. My contributions to the common stock often equalled the amount of all the others put together. I became the pride of the gang; and no wonder—for I strove for Betsy, and was cheered on by her acclaim, while I was scowled at by my rivals, who were quick enough, though her parents had no suspicion of it, to see her preference of me. When we thought it proper time, I proposed to the father for the hand of his daughter. He had no objection to me as a son-in-law, further than that he had all but promised her to Long Ned, but would leave it to Betsy and myself to manage the affair as we best could, and would interfere no farther with his authority than for the good of the gang. If Betsy was pleased, he cared not whether Long Ned or I had her. When I told her the result of my conference with her father, she was as well pleased as myself.

'Bill,' she said, 'you will not win me from Long Ned with both ease and honour. He is no contemptible rival. He will be at you as soon as he comes to the camp, for his mother will tell him. Now, be a man, and do not yield while you can stand to him; for, much as I love you—and you know I love you dearly—I could not marry you if you are beat. Nay, the people might make me marry him; and you must leave the gang, or your life would not be safe for one night. What says my Bill?'

I looked upon the lovely girl with astonishment, her language was so unlike anything I had ever heard from a woman. In Scotland here, if a woman knew her lover was to fight, she would almost go distracted, and do all in her power to prevent him. I could scarcely believe my ears, I was as yet so little used to their ways. As I stood looking at her, a shade of anger passed over her face, and the tears came into her eyes; she turned away her head, and sobbed aloud. This roused me.

'What ails my Betsy?' I said, taking her in my arms. She still sobbed, and pushed me from her.

'I am the most unfortunate girl in the world,' she cried. 'I love a man, and he is a coward.'

'A coward, Betsy!' cried I. 'What do you mean? I am no coward. I fear not the face of clay.'

Turning to me with one of her sweet smiles—

'I am not deceived, then, in my Bill?' she said. 'He is not afraid of Long Ned?'

'No, my love; nor of the whole gang, one after another—one down, another come on,' said I. 'Are we friends again?'

'O Bill, we are more than friends,' she sobbed. 'I love you dearly, and am proud of you.'

. Arm in arm, we returned to the tents.

Long Ned had just come home after an excursion; so, as soon as he saw us, his rage knew no bounds; and his dark eyes flashed fire, as he came forward and ordered me to quit my hold of the girl. There were few words passed between us; every one knew what was to take place, so no one interfered further than to see fair play. You recollect, Square, I always loved a bit of a row. The lessons I took on board from Sambo the black cook, stood me now in great stead. I learned from him the African mode, to hold the stick with both hands by the ends, and cover the body with it, more especially the head; having thus the advantage of striking with either hand, and puzzling my opponent. Ned, who was an expert cudgel-player, chose that weapon; I, nothing loath, agreed. Two sticks of equal length were chosen. Betsy, at my side, held my jacket, while Ned's mother held his. His anger was so great, he could scarce restrain himself until we were ready. I knew my task, and was cool—as if I waited the boatswain's call to it. So away we went. I at once felt my advantage; and, expert as he was, he could not reach me—my mode embarrassed him. I hit him on both sides, not severely, as I might with ease have done; but he had never touched me. We paused, for a minute or two, for breath.

'Ned,' says I to him, 'I bear you no malice. I could have struck you down every time I have touched you. Yield me Betsy, and be friends.'

'I will die first,' he cried, kindling in rage.

'And if you yield, I will disown you,' said his mother.

As he made at me again—'Don't spare him,' cried Betsy, 'as you wish to win me.'

This was enough; but he plied me so hard for some time, that it was with difficulty I could defend myself. I had been hit slightly several times before an opportunity offered, so active was he and quick in his assaults. But my mode was not nearly so exhausting as his; and it being now my turn, I embraced it: down he went as if he had been shot. His mother raised him up, and encouraged him to renew the fight; while Betsy wiped some blood from my face, which came from a slight wound in the forehead; and, squeezing gently my hand, said I was her own brave boy; able to win a wife, and protect her. I see you do not much admire my story, but it shews the character of the people I was among. So, the short and the long of it is, Long Ned was carried to his tent, beaten to his mother's satisfaction; and I was married to Betsy next day, agreeably to the gipsy fashion—that is, a feast was given to all the gang—and her father delivered her up to me with a long harangue, concluding by declaring us man and wife, and the others wishing us joy.

Betsy and I did not remain long with the gang after this. Long Ned and his mother were our implacable enemies, and neither of us were safe from their revenge—not that I cared a straw for them openly, but I knew their character too well to be at ease. Betsy and I left them, have lived well and comfortably since, and could save money, only there is no occasion for it. We, like all the men of superior minds in the world, live by our wits; there is no occasion for working when we can live without. I never want money and a good diet. Now, you say you have no particular object in view, save to get a ship for India; and why should you court difficulties and dangers abroad when there is so rich a prospect before you at home? From experience, I can assure you, no trade is so easy, or quickly learned, as begging. The first day is the worst; after that, it came quite natural and agreeable."

There was a romance and bustle in the events he had narrated, which had a strange charm for me, and opened up a new leaf in the book of life. I had no conception of beggary but as extreme misery, and, until now, held them as synonymous terms, from what I had witnessed in Edinburgh in the early part of my youth. I had had no idea of the regular systematic beggar. My notions were formed upon the destitute widow and orphan, those whom I had herded with, who shrunk from importunity, and scarce let their wants be known; enduring want to the extreme ere they stealthily crept forth from their abodes of wretchedness, and returned as soon as their urgent wants were satisfied. To Bill I made known my surprise at the history he had given me of himself, and my wonder that any one should ask charity, save those who had no other means of supporting themselves.

"I once knew as little of the matter as you," said he; "but this I know now: were none but the really needy to ask charity, they would soon be supplied, and fare well; but it is too good a trade, once begun, to be given up easily. But here is Betsy, to tell us dinner is ready."

The repast did honour to her cooking, and consisted of the best the town could afford. She herself sat at table, more lady-like than I thought it possible a gipsy girl could have done.

"Bill," says I, "if your trade were as honourable as it appears to be profitable, I would commence it this night."

"And what is more dishonourable in it than any other calling a man may choose to live by?" said the young wife, with a smile. "Is not the whole bent of every one's mind to get as much from every one of his fellow-men as he can? Does not the king and his ministers get all they can from the people by taxations? Do not the ministers of the church get all they can from their flocks? Do not the lairds get all they can for their lands; the merchant get all he can for his goods; and the poor man get all he can for his labour? Real utility or value enters not into their minds at bargain-making. It is how they can get most of their neighbour's property, in the safest and easiest manner. What is honour but a fluctuating opinion? As I have heard my father say, when he spoke the words I am now uttering—it is honourable for kings to take their subjects from their peaceful employments, and send them to plunder and destroy other states; it is honourable to be one of the plunderers; for one man to shoot another for some trifling word is honourable. Every nation has its own notions of this same thing called honour. But we of the wandering tribe think it means gold; for he that has got the most of it is the most esteemed, and he that has not a penny in his purse has not a jot of honour, though he had all the virtues. And why? Because, from the king to the beggar, no one can expect to add to their store from him. He is an egg already eaten—an empty shell; and, as such, crushed and thrown aside. These are the words of my father."

I heard the bewitching creature with astonishment, and could not but admire how easily every class finds consolation to themselves by arguing as it suits their views. I had often before remarked, that when numbers of any class associated, they rose in their own estimation; but I had no idea that the beggars carried it so far.

"But it is under deceit and false pretences," said I, to enjoy the pleasure of hearing her speak, "you extort money from the humane and charitable. I would rather work to the death."

"That is a matter of choice or education," replied she. "We use no more deceit than is necessary to obtain our object, and all the world do the same, while we do more to give pleasure to the good than any other class. Don't we keep alive the kindly feelings of man? My Bill there, as you saw him this morning, was a walking lecture upon the miseries of war; and, I am sure, from what I saw in your looks at the time, that you felt a real pleasure in having it in your power to give him the half-crown—nay, had you walked on, you would have slept the sounder for it. Had you tippled it, or spent it foolishly, you would have regretted parting with it. Even now, that you think we had no need of it, your self-esteem is only wounded at being imposed upon; but your heart upbraids you not for your good intentions; and may not a beggar feel pleasure in the success of his arts as much as those of another calling?"

"Does not Betsy speak like a parson?" said Bill. "I can't say I feels as if all was right when I am rigged out for an excursion; but, somehow, she appears to have reason on her side; and, even if I were to get a ship, I must leave my pretty Bess, so I just get on; and I am now pretty well used to it. If I had stayed by my trade, as my parents wished me, I could have wrought for her at home; but Betsy is pleased, and I have no more to care for."

"And why should I not?" she quickly replied. "I have been bred to it, and know nothing else. I could not live mewed up in a house, however grand. A wide heath or a dark wood, with a few light, verdant, sunny spots embossed in its bosom, has far more charms for me than a crowded city or painted room; and the piece of money, dexterously obtained, has a beauty about it that does not belong to the fixed income. I had as soon be in my grave as a sober citizen; for there would be as much exercise for the mind in the one case as the other."

For a moment, I looked with admiration at the lovely girl, as her face glowed with animation while she spoke; but pity soon took its place, suggesting the mournful reflection, that a mind of her powers was in a state of nature; and what it might have been had it been cultivated. A sigh escaped me at the thought of my own inability to lend instruction. She saw the cloud upon my brow.

"Come, Bill," she said, laughing, "you neglect your friend; he grows sad. Shall we to the kenn to-night? We are expected."

"To be sure, Betsy," replied he. "Square, fill your glass; and don't break your heart because Betsy is my wife, and can't be yours. There will be rare fun, I expect, and would advise you to go."

I was in that mood, at the time, between the serious and the sad, contrasting the pious and modest Helen Grey with the pert and forward beauty before me. Both were lovely in their persons—but how different in expression and mind! Helen was a lily, modest, and filling the air around her with a mild perfume; Betsy, an exotic flower, of surpassing beauty, with an odour so powerful it required a time to render it not offensive; yet it was a lovely flower; and, in a skilful gardener's hands, would have been the honour of his plots and the object of his pride. Under the example and tuition of Helen, I had felt some serious impressions—at times a thorn, at others a balm, as my own wayward actions were approved or condemned. I wished to speak seriously to the interesting creature before me, but could not find resolution. I was conscious that it would be an evening of regret if I was left alone, and so I agreed to accompany them.

"Hurrah!" shouted Bill. "You will, I see, be a mumper yet. But you can't appear in that rig, Square; you could not get admittance. Betsy will furnish you out of my store. Will you be a soldier, a sailor, or a ruined, burned-out tradesman? I guess you will be a tar?"

"Certainly," I replied.

"Shall you lack a whole fin, or part of one, or be lame of a leg? Make your choice.

"Oh, half an arm," said I, now ripe for the fun I expected.

In a few minutes Betsy had me so completely changed, I hardly knew myself, even when I looked in the glass. An immense long tye of false hair—mine being then of a sandy colour, the same nearly as Bill's—was brought forth, opened, and my own shorter tye secured in it. With a liquid she browned my face. To this I at first objected, until she assured me she would wash it off in the morning. An old pair of canvass trowsers, a ragged jacket, a shabby vest and hat were given to me. When I came to put on the jacket, she caused me to double my arm, laying my hand upon the top of my shoulder; and there was a case in the tattered arm, made of leather, to receive it. With difficulty my doubled limb was forced in, presenting the elbow first. For sometime the constrained position pained me, for there was a flap of leather that came over my open hand, and was made fast to my trowsers, to diminish the bulk.

" Where did you lose your arm, my good lad?" said the smiling Betsy, as she offered a halfpenny in jest.

" Faith, I do not know, mistress, if you have not cut it off for me," I replied.

" Jack, that will never do," said she. " I will send for the constable, you impostor." And she turned, smiling, from me, with all the airs of a fine lady; then turning round, and assuming the attitude of a beggar—" Bless your pretty face," she said, " sweet lady, spare a halfpenny to a poor tar, who lost his precious limb in defending the beauties of Old England."

" I have no coppers."

" Oh, bless you, beautiful lady," she continued, " I would die of want were it not for angels like you." And she whined along the floor, as if she had followed some one.

Bill and I could not refrain our laughter.

" Does she not do it in style?" he said, exultingly. " Take the dear creature's advice, and copy her, and you need never want a good bed and a good diet, besides money in your fob, and be a jolly beggar."

" Are there more kinds of beggars than one?" said I.

" Oh!" replied he, " there are many kinds; for instance, jolly beggars, sturdy beggars, humble beggars, and randy beggars. I had forgot the gentle beggars; but you will see them of all descriptions." And away we trudged; Betsy as an old decrepit woman, and with so well-managed a metamorphosis that I, who saw the change effected, could scarce believe my eyes. Bill was not the same person I had seen in the morning; he only wanted his left arm, which was bandaged by his side, and his leg supported at the knee by a wooden substitute for the lower part of it.

" This," said he, " was my last cruising dress when I was among them. I was maimed, as you see, in the gallant Admiral Hawke's own ship, when we defeated Conflans. You may have either lost your fin there or at Cape Breton; for our meetings are a kind of masquerade—no one knows his fellow, but as in the character he for the time assumes."

After a few turns through dark alleys, we arrived at a low, dirty-looking public-house. As we entered, Bill whispered in my ear—

" Now, Square," said he, " this is Liberty Hall—every one eats what he pleases, drinks what he pleases, and I may say, speaks as he pleases. All I advise is, do not be too ready to take or give offence. Betsy has agreed to sit by you—be guided by her."

We entered one by one. A single flickering light was attached to the wall; everything bespoke the most abject poverty, until we had passed through a second small apartment, when the sound of voices, mixed with boisterous laughter, fell upon my ears.

" We are too late, I fear," said Betsy—" the fun is begun."

The next moment the door opened—and such a scene! I did not think the universe could have produced such a collection of apparent misery and mutilation. The miraculous pool of Saloam, the evening before the angel descended to trouble the waters, I really believe never furnished such a spectacle of incurables. To be more particular would only disgust you: all was hilarity and vulgar enjoyment. Viands of the richest kinds—roast fowls, and meats of all varieties—smoked on a table at one side of the room, and which, as called for by the guests, was cut off in proportion to the amount ordered, handed to the expectant guest, and the money received before the plate was delivered. Some had done, and commenced their favourite liquors; others were doing justice to the cookery—praising, and not a few finding fault.

" What shall I have the pleasure of handing to Mr Kay?" cried the landlord, bowing.

" Betsy my love, what shall we have?" said Bill.

" What you please, Bill, for myself. Square, what do you wish?" she said.

" Oh, I care not," I replied.

" Then, landlord, a duck; and have you any green peas yet?"

" The season is backward; I have some," replied he " but they are a little high priced."

" So much the better—send half a crown's worth with the duck, for me and my friends."

" Well Kay, you always do the thing genteelly; but who is this friend of yours?" said a fat little man, in very rusty black, of a clerical cut.

" An old messmate of mine, I met by chance to-day—a real good un.

" As Mr Kay's friend, I drink your health, and our better acquaintance."

" Thank you, Doctor," said Kay; and I did the same.

After every one had satisfied his appetite, and got his liquor before him, the noise of voices, joined to the boisterous laughter, was absolutely deafening—all were in committees of two's and three's, talking. I began to despair of getting my curiosity gratified, by Betsy, on the spot; for the noise was so great that to whisper was impossible. Never in my life had I witnessed such unbounded apparent happiness and glee—all was enjoyment. At length a little hunch-backed caricature of a man leaped upon the head of the table and, seated like a Turk, cross-legged, struck the table with a wooden mallet, and, in a hoarse, croaking voice, commanded silence and attention to their president for the night. In a minute all was still. Without rising to his feet, he croaked forth—

" Ladies and gentlemen, we are met here to forget the cares and toils of the day. You have all (or you have your purse to blame) had your pleasure of the eatables—of the drinkables you shall have the same provided. I add no more, save a word for our worthy landlord. He says, if we do not be less noisy, and give him less trouble than the last time we met, he must either cease to enjoy our company, or be on more intimate terms with the Magistrates—an honour he does not covet. He has been a man to be sought after by the authorities already. Now, ladies and gentlemen, I call on Rhyming Bob for his last new song—ruff him in. Up rose a tall, gaunt, shabby-genteel, pale-looking figure; bowed to the company, and began, in a cracked voice, affectedly to chant some doggerel verses against the Minister of State. I looked inquiringly at Betsy.

" Oh, that is the poet," said she; " a gentle beggar by nature and profession; he has no shift but his verses, and a poor shift it makes for him. He bothers the gentry with his rhymes; sometimes gets kicked out, sometimes a sixpence. Hand him, when done, a glass, Bill; he has been more fortunate than usual if he has one of his own. He had better attended to teaching his scholars than song-writing. Our friend, the Doctor here, is also a gentle beggar—he asks nothing on the streets and highways—he writes a good letter as a distressed clergyman or reduced man of education, and lives well, as you see. A great number, almost all the maimed, are jolly beggars, like Bill, and what you are to be. They have numerous ways of earning a subsistence, and spend it as freely. They never take anything save money in charity, for, poor souls, they are too feeble to carry heavy gifts."

The noisy applause of the poet's song put a stop to our whispering. When order was restored, Mrs Kay was called upon for a song. Betsy immediately stood up in her old woman's attire, and astonished me, little as I know of music, by the sweetness of her voice, and the effect with which she sung, " An Old Woman Clothed in Grey." Twice was she obliged to sing it to the company, which she did with the utmost good-nature. When the deafening applause had abated, or, I may rather say, the storm of noises had ceased, a stout, red-haired, broad-shouldered

rather shortish man was called upon to sing. He gave a Welsh song, the air of which was pretty, but the words uncouth to my ear.

"That is one of the sturdy beggars," said Betsy; "he refuses nothing that is given him, carries all upon his person, and often, before he reaches the proper place to dispose of his gatherings, they amount to the weight of many stones. He always tells the charitable, when asked what is his complaint that prevents him from working—I can't speak the Welsh word, but it means 'sheer laziness.' The people are confounded at the, to them, unintelligible and strange name of the disease, and are ready to relieve the afflicted man. Once or twice, thay say, he has been detected by countrymen of his own, who laughed at his impudence, and gave the true meaning of the words. The sturdies are a numerous class. The randies are nearly, if not of the same class; they abuse and threaten, until they are supplied, when they dare with impunity. The humble, poor creatures, are old or real cripples—take what they get, and are thankful; there is not one of them here this night, that I see."

We had now sat in the pandemonium for nearly three hours. The potency of the liquor had for some time began to preponderate—angry words were exchanging, and some were sleeping, with their heads leaning upon the table. Bill himself was more than half-seas over, and began to bawl out a sea song. Betsy and I endeavoured to keep him in order, and wished him to retire. We had succeeded, and were rising to leave the company—Bill only half inclined, when a stranger entered the hall of confusion and drunkenness. We were on our feet. I saw Betsy turn pale as death, and turn her head aside. A number of voices called out, "Hurra! hurra!" here is Long Ned. A young female, whose eye I had noticed was seldom turned from where we sat, cried out—

"Betsy, you are not going away because your old sweetheart, Long Ned, has come in?"

"Shiver my timbers if we are!" cried Bill; and in a moment sat down and called for more liquor. I, as well as Betsy, saw that the envious female was bent on mischief; but how to prevent it I knew not. Long Ned had seated himself at the other side of the table, gloomy as Satan. I felt her tremble, as she sat by my side, I believe more through rage at the female than fear. Long Ned was evidently bent on some mischief or other, and he was quite sober. Bill and he eyed each other for some time. Betsy was coaxing him to get him away, as well as myself.

"No, I will not leave the room," he said, "while that scoundrel is in it; I will face him or fight him out, if he says an uncivil word to you or myself."

The same female sat only one seat from him; I saw them whispering together. Betsy's dark eyes glanced fire. She unbuckled his timber leg, and took it off. Scarce was this done, when Ned said aloud—

"Tell me, Kay, how much you have sold the jilt Bessy for. I see she is very gracious with your ac"—— He had only got thus far, when the wooden leg was launched across the table, and felled him to the ground.

A scene of uproar and confusion no words can express, ensued: the lights were extinguished; blows were dealt furiously around; and the sleepers awoke and joined in the strife. Bitterly did I regret my curiosity, as well as the bondage my arm was in from its long confinement; it was benumbed and painful. As I had no immediate interest in the strife, I retired to one corner of the room, where I found severals as anxious as myself to escape. Shouts of murder and groans were mixed with vengeful cries. At length the door was burst open, and a body of constables entered. The moment I saw this, I slipped along the side of the room and darted past them, receiving in my flight several severe blows, and leaving the skirts and breasts of my jacket in the hands of those in the way who attempted to stop my career. I turned down the first opening I came to, and ceased to run, as no one appeared to follow me. Fortunately I had the old canvass trowsers and vest above my own, in which was secured my guineas and silver. With some difficulty I freed myself from the jacket, then I with ease got off the others, and had the mortification to find myself, pretty late in the evening, without a lodging, jacket, or hat.

As I began to cool, and find myself secure from pursuit, the contusions I had received from the staves of the constables pained me very much, particularly one I had received upon the head; I put up my hand and found it bleeding pretty fresh. Thus was I in a fine mess to seek for a decent lodging, or account for my present plight. As I turned over in my mind for a plausible story, I perceived a respectable-looking inn still open, and made straight for it. There were several seafaring men, like captains of coasters, sitting in the tap. When I entered, all eyes were turned upon me. The landlord insisted upon turning me out without allowing me to speak. The company took my part, and insisted that I should be heard. I had now my story ready as near the truth as I dared—I told them I was a stranger from Scotland, on my way to London in quest of a vessel, and had only arrived in the town that evening, when I had had a quarrel and fight, having been insulted, and some one had carried off my hat, jacket, and bundle; but that I had plenty of money to pay my way. As soon as I had finished, the landlord became all civility; I got my head bound up, and a good lodging, and got intimate with one or two of the captains before I retired to bed.

Next morning my head ached, but nothing to speak of. I arose, sent for a dealer in clothes, and purchased a jacket and hat, had breakfast, and took a walk through the town. As I did not intend to leave it until I had heard the issue of the brawl, nothing else was talked of. The fight between them and the constables had been long and severe, for they made a desperate resistance; and it was not until several of the inhabitants had reinforced the civil power, that the beggars were secured and lodged in jail, male and female. I wished only to know the fate of Bill and Betsy, and then started upon my journey—I wished to have no further intercourse with them. My bundle and necessaries in it I had given up for lost unless they were liberated, at least Betsy, through the course of the day. I could not have found my way to their room without inquiry; and this it was neither prudent nor of any use to make, until they were liberated. Well, the magistrates were busy examining them, I was told, the whole forenoon; and the issue was, that all the able-bodied rascals—Bill amongst the rest—were sent to man his Majesty's navy, and the females were to be confined and then banished the town for ever. I returned to my inn, and, by appointment, met my new acquaintances, the captains—one of them, the captain of a brig, was loading grain for London. I was weary of walking on foot, and agreed with him for a passage, leaving my conductors to the beggar's ball in durance; the males expecting to be sent off in a day or two, and the females making out their solitary confinement preparatory to their banishment.

WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

GLEANINGS OF THE COVENANT.

Chap. XVII.—John Govan's Narrative.

In the Greyfriars' Churchyard of Edinburgh I have often spent a solitary hour, during what, in Scotland, is called the "gloaming." The large and handsome monument which still records the sufferings of the covenanted friends of freedom, always occupied my deepest thoughts; and, when I looked around me on the quiet solitude of the scene, on the modest and unassuming style of the sacred edifice, and on the old and scarcely-visible fort,* which had stood so many sieges, and witnessed so many changes, I have often let the moon peep upon my meditative movements, over the top of the Calton Hill, Arthur's Seat, or Salisbury Crags. There passed, on the outside of the wall, the light-hearted carter, whistling alongside of his horse; or the fish-wife, proclaiming the caller commodity she wished to sell; or the merry schoolboy, indicating his relish of freedom from school restraint by boisterous mirth and unrestrained motion;—and yet, on the inner side of the wall, all was alone and peaceful, as if I had taken up my station in a far-off Highland glen. These were the days of my youthful feelings, and warm and generous emotion. If my blood did not *boil* within me, it warmed exceedingly, as the vision of other times and far different scenes crossed my brain, and was reflected from my heart. From the works of our historians—of Knox and Woodrow in particular—I had early become acquainted with the history of those times, (which are still continuing to interest our feelings and influence our judgment;) and I could not fail to image out more particularly the dismal aspect which this very locality presented in 1679. Whilst engaged one evening in these reveries, I inadvertently wandered away behind the church, and stood looking out upon the moonshine, which, "o'er the dark a silver mantle threw;" whilst the officer of the Greyfriars' Church, seeing nobody in the yard, quietly, and unperceived by me, locked the door, and retired to his home in the Netherbow. Accordingly, when I began to think, about eleven o'clock, of home and repose, I was not a little surprised to find all egress by the customary outlet impossible. The night was indeed lovely—mild and still; but yet there was something not altogether satisfactory in being compelled to enjoy it in company with the dead of many generations. A large mastiff, too, which had concealed itself for some time under the wall, came forth into the moonlight, with a bone in his jaws—manifestly a human skull.

> "And I saw the lean dog, *beneath the wall*,
> Hold o'er the dead its carnival;
> And its white tusks crunched o'er the whiter skull,
> As it slipped through its jaws, when the edge grew dull,
> As it lazily mumbled the bones of the dead."

The sight was not only jarring to all my more composed and soothing reflections, but not unaccompanied with a certain indefinite apprehension of evil. The season had been hot, and hydrophobia had shewn its dreadful existence in Leith Walk and in the Canongate. Two persons had died of it raving mad. I was, therefore, exceedingly anxious to place the high wall which surrounded the Greyfriars' Churchyard betwixt my companion and myself. But how was this to be effected? I ventured to raise my voice, and shout aloud; but no notice was taken of my call. Nay, my growling and crunching neighbour approached me—offering seeming defiance. He was a fearful animal, of that very breed which I have all my life trusted the least—I may say feared and abhorred the most. I began to speak soothingly to him; but, to all my "poor fellows," and other accents of friendly intercourse, he only answered with a deeper growl. What was to be done? I was afraid to renew my shout; for that manifestly annoyed him; and yet he seemed evidently approaching me. Merciful God! I could see the very glare of his eyes, even in the softened moonlight. I looked up, in perfect despair, to the moon and to the stars, and could not help envying them their secure positions. I would have become anything heavenly, even a star of the very least magnitude, to have secured my retreat from this bull-headed monster. I edged myself towards the monument of the Martyrs; and, with some difficulty, got myself elevated a considerable way up one of the pillars. I clung to every projection like one perishing; and, being young, slender, and full of elastic vigour, I at last gained the top of the wall, from whence I immediately informed a night watch, then passing along, of my terrible situation. In the meantime, the hideous monster made a spring from a tombstone to the top of the same wall; but, instead of visiting me, he dropped himself quietly into a carrier's cart, to which he belonged, and which stood near the doorway of the "Harrow" public-house. I was immediately relieved, both from my fears and my position, by the assistance of John Brown, the Greyfriars' Church officer, who opened the gate, and assisted me in my descent. The incident was somewhat singular; and, as I stood in need of some refreshment, and honest Johnny Dowie's shop did not shut till twelve, I asked the pleasure of John Brown's company to a red herring and a glass

> "Of as guid, nappy liquor
> As ever reamed in horn or bicker."

During the discussion of these viands, (and, maybe, a wee drap of Highland whisky made into warm toddy,) John Brown and I became exceedingly well acquainted. He had occupied his present office for upwards of forty years, was an enthusiast about the Covenanters, and possessed, in fact, some written documents on the subject, which he promised to shew me. He was a lineal descendant, he informed me, of the famous Thomas Brown, who suffered, along with John Waddel, Andrew Sword, John Clide, and James Wood, on Magus Muir. The documents, as I afterwards found, were nothing more nor less than some scattered and pencilled notices by one John Govan, in the parish of Kirkliston, of his share in the affair of Bothwell Brig, and his sufferings in consequence thereof. I shall avail myself partially of these pencillings, in the following narrative:—

"O Lord, thy mercies are manifold! Thou wilt not desert thine ancient inheritance—thy puir, suffering, persecuted remnant. O Lord! thou wilt, and thou *must* stand by thy servants, godly Hamilton, and Cargill, and Rathillet, and by us and our cause—which, guid Lord, is, after all, thine own—in this awful day. I see the Duke's

* Edinburgh Castle.

men on the hillside opposite. They are now, even now, making downwards towards the bridge. They have opened their guns. I must up and do my duty. Lord, stand by the righteous!"

The battle, as is here anticipated, began; and (owing to the sad divisions in the camp of the nonconformists) was won by the Duke of Buccleugh and Monmouth, almost without any resistance. Notwithstanding the humane exertions of the Duke—owing to the sanguinary revenge of Clavers in particular—the slaughter after the battle, in what may be termed the wantonness of cruelty, was very great indeed. The next extract from Govan's diary, confirms this historical truth:—

"And thou, O Lord, hast yet more work to do for poor John Govan. But poor Samuel Logan lies dead in the next field there—I saw him run when I fell into a ditch, and just lay still; but the destroyer was hard behind him. Sam *darned* at last in a corn-field; and there I saw him shot through the head by that terrible Clavers. He did not give him an instant to make his peace wi' his Maker. O Lord! wherefore is it thus with thy Zion? But it belongs not to poor John Govan to find fault wi' sic a Master—thy ways are not as our ways, nor thy thoughts as ours."

Poor John Govan was, however, at last taken prisoner whilst endeavouring to conceal himself in an outhouse of a farm steading in Strathavon, but not till after a whole volley of balls had been poured in upon his retreat, only one of which, however, had taken effect, and that on the fleshy part of his leg. Notwithstanding his wound, and the stiffness, which, after it had bled profusely, was induced upon the limb, he was compelled to march on foot, along with upwards of three hundred prisoners—many of them badly wounded—towards Edinburgh. Mr Reid and Mr King—both of whom were afterwards tried, tortured, hanged, and quartered—were of the number. To avoid the commiseration and sympathy of the more populous districts, Clavers marched the prisoners through the upper district of Lanarkshire. At Lanark the first halt was made for the night; and there the men were tied together by twos and threes, and compelled to bivouack in the open air, in a barnyard. In vain were all their groanings and complainings—some from their wounds, others from hunger or thirst, and not a few from the dismal fate which had overtaken the cause which they supported. The infamous soldiery, urged on, or at least not properly checked by their leaders, only laughed at their calamities, telling them to be patient—that patience was a d——d good supper—a great deal too good for a Covenanter, &c., &c. Upon this I found the following reflections in Govan:—

"O Lord! when will their ire be stayed?—when will thy face return and shine again upon thy heritage? This night has been an awful night: my sufferings, all our sufferings, have been great, great beyond bearing—four of our number have died of their wounds and fatigue. My own cousin, William Young, has paid the debt of nature; he has gone to the bosom of his God; for William was a just, and a good, and a holy man. I held his head till he expired; it was a sore struggle, but he quailed not; he repeated as long as he could speak—'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him; my heart and my flesh may faint and fail—oh, yes! the earthly house of our tabernacle must be dissolved; but we have a house, John, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; and the spirit and the bride say come;' and with these words, he bowed his head and he gave up the ghost. He and I were tied together by the legs, and I sat till morning light with his dead body in my arms. These dreadful men only scoffed when I spoke of death, and bade me take my supper off the dead man's bones. O Lord! how long? O Lord! how long?"

The next restingplace seems to have been in the midst of the "Lang Whang"—a barren and bleak muir, which stretches eastward ten or eleven miles beyond Carnwath. Here an enclosure was effected by means of stakes and ropes, as the binding system had been found ineffectual, there being generally some method adopted by the fettered sufferers to relieve themselves. Within this enclosure these three hundred men stood or lay during a dark and a rainy night, without fire, and with very scanty provisions; whilst the demons on the outside of the enclosure lighted up fires of the heath, and of some peats which were found ready dried in the neighbourhood, and spent the night in roasting all manner of barn-door fowls, pigs, and even sheep, which they had captured as they passed along. Refreshment of a spirituous character was not denied them; and their songs, and their blasphemies, and their insulting language, "rose up in the midst of the wilderness"—as Govan expresses it—"to the throne of the most high, calling for vengeance in the day of retribution, on the head of the oppressor."

"This," continues he, "is a second morning, and a cold, and a gloomy, and a dreadful one it is. Clavers and his attendants are galloping up from Carnwath, where they have been spending the night in jollification wi' the laird; and we are just about to renew our dismal march. My leg is exceedingly troublesome; but, as we advance but slowly, I make a shift to get on. One man died last night raving mad; and another, I much fear, has put an end, with his own hand, to an unendurable existence. O Lord, give me strength to bear whatever thy wisdom sees meet to inflict!"

From the Lang Whang, the Grass Market was reached on the succeeding evening, and, after being united with two hundred prisoners from Stirling, they were all marched from the Grass Market; and, after some seasonable refreshment, ordered by the humane and kind-hearted Duke of Monmouth, into the Greyfriars' Churchyard, there to abide—from the month of June to that of December following—all the peltings of the pitiless storm, without a sufficiency of food, and entirely without covering.

Men of Scotland, was there ever anything like this? Can the remembrance of such atrocities ever be obliterated? Can century upon century, as they slowly roll on their course, ever place these events, and this event in particular, beyond the range of your interest? We read with horror of the scaffold and the guillotine; but what immediate death could equal in atrocity their protracted suffering? Friends have they, indeed, within these walls, but they cannot, or but seldom, and at great risk, obtain an entrance. Many are disposed to supply the houseless prisoner with couch and covering, but they only supply additional means of debauchery to the ruffian soldiery. The chambers of the *many dead* are defiled and rendered pestilential by the presence of the *many living*. Death, in ordinary circumstances, is a boon to this. Winter approaching—(nay, has arrived)—the sleety shower plashing over the Castle—the whirling drifts, eddying about, amongst, and beneath the tombstones—the wild, long, endless night, to which succeeds no dawn of comfort—no warm chamber—no invigorating and cheering meal. Oh, honest and fearless shades, tell us all! how did you stand it? How was it that you did not sell your remaining strength as dearly as possible?—that you did not rush like tigers upon your guards, and perish whilst rending them with your teeth and nails? But ye are silent, as becomes ye; so I must apply to honest John Govan's MS.

"This is now the sixth week that I have dwelt in this dreary place. Oh, happy they who lie beneath! they are covered, and feel not our privations, and pains, and sufferings; and yet freedom and home is offered to us, and accepted by many. God forgive them, if it be his will!—but John Govan will never accept his liberty on such terms. His mother's shade would rise up in judgment. Shall I

take their infamous oaths, or subscribe their no less infamous bonds? Shall I swear that the Bishop's death is murder, and that the resistance of an oppressed and persecuted people is rebellion? Shall I 'bind, oblige, and enact myself,' that I shall not hereafter take up arms in so good a cause? No! I will sooner perish, inch by inch; I will sooner suffer the tortures of the boot, and the final adjudgment of the maiden. Men are yet unborn that will bless us—a whole people, happy in a pure religion and a free government, will adore the memory of the most humble son of the Covenant; they will build and erect pillars and monuments to our memory; they will count, anxiously count, kindred with us; they will record and register our deeds and our sufferings; and, when this world, with all its interests, shall have ceased to exist, we shall be in everlasting remembrance."

Thus reasoned, and thus were supported, these men, who set at defiance threats, and entreaties, and insidious reasonings; who valued the approbation of their own consciences above every other; who feared their God, and had no other fear.

As winter drew on, the intercourse with the inhabitants of Edinburgh became more frequent and less easily obstructed. It was absolutely necessary that brothers, and even sisters, and wives, and mothers, should be permitted occasionally to carry some warm broth, or some still stronger stimulants, to those whose rations were so limited, and whose exposure to the cold air was so dismally protracted. Even partial scaffoldings were erected around the churchyard, and towards the east, or town side in particular; and some imperfect, no doubt, but still acceptable shelter was thus extended to the perishing inmates. It was not possible that disease should not walk in the train of so much deprivation. Many died of fever; some of consumption or bad colds; and not a few of downright debility. The guards, too, became tired of the monotony of their task, and often retired into adjoining taverns to keep up their spirits. Some escaped by one means and some by another; one in the dress of a sister, and another in the garb of a mason. An Act of Indemnity was at last passed, from which, however, about twenty were exempted, and perhaps nine or ten executed. John Govan seems to have survived these dismal times by some years; for I find him next on Magus Muir, encouraging and supporting his friends who suffered. His concluding sentences are these:—

"I have seen, I have seen—mine eyes have seen thy salvation: Presbytery, my beloved Presbytery, established by law; freedom of conscience secured to all; a Protestant King; a Protestant government; every man dwelling in peace, under his own vine and his own fig tree; mine own son delivering the word of God to a Protestant congregation, and protected by law. My old age has been soothed by many comforts; the partner of my fortunes and sharer of all my trials still alive, and capable of uniting with me in the song of thanksgiving—verily the Lord has been merciful and gracious, and I now await his divine pleasure with perfect resignation. I am old, and have had my day. I trust I have not altogether neglected my duty; and when it shall be His blessed will to call me, I will depart cheerfully home, and appear in his presence. My sins and imperfections are indeed many; but I know in whom I have believed, and to whom I have committed the soul, my immortal part. Lord, lettest thou now thy servant depart in peace."

Thus far honest John Govan, who seems to have slept with his fathers a year or two after the Revolution, in the eighty-fourth year of his age. The papers, John Brown informed me, passed into his grandfather's keeping, in consequence of the friendship which continued to exist betwixt the Govans and the Browns; the Govans having long ago emigrated to America, and left the Browns a bequest of books, and these papers besides.

Chapter XVIII.—"Old Bluntie."

Creehope Linn was a well-known retreat of the old Covenanters in Dumfriesshire. The water, in the course of successive ages, has cut itself a smooth, winding, and extremely deep passage, through an immense bed of sandstone; and so capricious have been its excavations, that, whilst the rock beneath is hollowed out into vast recesses, or natural caves and chambers, the rock above almost meets, and spreads a gloom, approaching to complete darkness, all around the caverns below. In these caverns—as I already, more than once, have had occasion to mention—the poor, persecuted flock found a temporary shelter and safety. There was something in the natural gloom, which induced melancholy and even fearful cogitations. One of these caves, immediately over what is still known by the appropriate designation of "Hell's Caldron," was, long after the Revolution, tenanted by an old man of singular aspect and character, who cobbled shoes for the peasantry around. His residence is still shewn, and known as the "Sutor's Seat." You may still see the hollow in the rock where he lay himself, and another which contained his implements. Tradition gives but few notices of his habits, but these few are perhaps worth recording. He was manifestly crazy; but still there was a method in his madness; and nothing would persuade him, after the Revolution, that he might ever safely visit the upper world. He still talked of Clavers, and Johnston, and Douglas, and Lag; and the rocks retain to this day, it is said, the names of some of these worthies, engraved by Sutor Bluntie's awl. Whether this appellation of "Bluntie" was his own original name, or whether it was only a cognomen, I cannot positively aver, though I think the *last* is more than probable, as I never heard of any person of this name in Dumfriesshire, or, indeed, anywhere else. He would, whilst in the act of mending a shoe or cobbling a boot, suddenly spring to his legs, look fearfully around him, and aver that he was not alone—that the pursuer was present—that a fearfully-disfigured mangled carcase stood in the very centre of Hell's Caldron. "There it stands!" he would say—"there! there! One jaw hanging down and one eye out; its legs broken; its skull in pieces; its belly ripped up; and yet it looks terribly at me. But the foul fiend will be here by-and-by—ay will he. He will soon settle your jabbering, Donald Cameron. There—there he comes: he is rushing, like a tempest, amongst these trees!—he is sweeping like a whirlwind amongst these rocks! Yes—he comes like a lion, roaring for his prey. But you are gone, Donald Cameron; it was as well. You sank into the Caldron to award the foul fiend, did you?—out of the frying-pan into the fire, lad! But now all's quiet again—I will finish my job in spite of you!" Even at mid-day, he kept a lamp constantly burning; and the rock is still blackened by the smoke. Thus, doubtless, his mind had taken a gloomy tint, which gradually diverged into downright insanity. But there was, after all, a method in his madness. There was a particular reason for the peculiar usages which his imagination conjured up; and it was this:—During the hottest period of the Persecution, Old Bluntie, who was by profession a shoemaker, had taken to this (to him) well-known and familiar recess. There he remained during the day; but at night he stole out, with the beasts of prey, to obtain food. His wife (for he had no children) had been shot, one day, by a dragoon, as she stood in her doorway. The man simply exclaimed—"That's the Covenanting b——!" fired his pistol, and the woman fell. Bluntie became, ever after this, altogether reckless; his only object was, by one means or another, by hook or by crook, to lead or decoy the persecutors into ambushes and danger. It was he mainly who decoyed the party into the Pass of Enterkin, already described in these

papers. He pretended to turn informer; but when the cave was searched, the inmate was flown; but a rifle-gun, from behind a hedge, seldom missed its mark. Another plan of his was of a somewhat original character. Crechope Linn divides, as I have already described, a sandstone rock, over which there lies a deep layer of moss, surmounted by close and tall heather—at least this was the case formerly, and may be so still. For a considerable way below the fall known by the name of the "Grey Mare's Tail," the linn *almost* meets above, and the heather *altogether*—to an inexperienced stranger, there is no evidence whatever of the dreadful abyss, of sixty feet depth, which yawns beneath. The ground around is level, and the water moves on at such a distance from the surface, that, unless in floods, it is quite inaudible. Clavers at this time was a stranger in the southern district, to which, in consequence of Turner's rising at Dumfries, he had been recently appointed; and his men were, of course, equally strangers. Old Bluntie caused a report to be conveyed to Clavers, whilst stationed at Croalchapel, in the neighbourhood, that a number of the friends of the Covenant, with old Cargill at their head, were to have a meeting, or conventicle, in a hollow glen, about fifty yards south of the Linn. It was, of course, to take place at night, and by favour of a harvest moon. Having been deceived by false intelligence on other occasions, Clavers ordered Red Rob to lead a troop of ten men into an adjoining cleugh, and there to dismiss one of them on foot to reconnoitre the ground. All this was done. But when the soldier came within sight of the place of meeting, he found only one man, whom he immediately hailed. The figure started, and ran swiftly away, whilst a ball went fully more swiftly in pursuit, but missed its mark. The soldier pursued sword in hand, and Bluntie made the best of his way onward towards the mountain pass of Bellybught. But, all at once, the soldier disappeared. He had sunk through the heather, and was not to be seen. The other nine dragoons, who had heard the report, now followed in hot pursuit, and, coming inadvertently on the same concealed danger, horse and man went over at once. The legs of several of the horses were broken; two stuck in the jaws of the ravine, which was not wide enough to allow them to sink; and one rider went plump to the bottom; whilst another had his neck broken, by being pitched on his head to some distance. This person's name was John Campbell; and the spot retains the name of "Jock's Step" to this hour.

Chapter XIX.—Thomas Harkness of Lockerben.

I HAVE already given some account of the famous rescue at Enterkin—I am now about to follow out one of the consequences of that rescue:—

Amongst those who were engaged in this affair, was Thomas Harkness of Lockerben, parish of Dalgarno. Immediately after the affray, the various individuals who were principally concerned in it separated. Andrew Clerk, in Leadhills, fled to Annandale; Samuel M'Ewan, in Glencairn, made off towards Cumnock; and Thomas Harkness hovered for some time amongst the Lowther heights, and then took refuge in a widow woman's house in Leadhills. Marion Morrison was the widow of David Douglas, a miner, who had lost his life in one of the shafts. She lived in a small cottage on the heathy muir, and at a considerable distance from the other houses, which, in these times, were not numerous. She had one only daughter—now woman-grown and comely, who, by spinning sale-yarn for the Lanark and Douglas market, supported herself and her mother, if not in comfort, at least in competence and peace. They were both religous persons, and took a deep interest in the persecuted remnant. Many a prayer had Marion put up in behalf of God's own people, to which her daughter May, as she was called, responded with deep sincerity. As the old song says, "It was in and about the Martinmas time" when Marion and her daughter were engaged, the one in carding and the other in spinning wool, the tarry-woo of the mountain land. May was blythe and cheerful—half-singing and half-chanting the now old, but then popular song—

> "Oh, tarry woo is ill to spin!
> Card it weel ere ye begin—
> Card it weel, and draw it sma'—
> Tarry woo is the best of a'!"

when the cat was observed to make a sudden movement across the hearth, and in stepped a tall figure, wrapped up in a shepherd's plaid. Marion started, and May all but screamed. But the figure soon unfolded itself, exclaiming—

"Be not afeared—be not afeared, honest Christian women. I am a poor, pursued, persecuted bird, flying into your hut from the claws of the kite. I have neither slept nor broken bread for these three days and three nights; but, now that the moon has waned, I have ventured down, in the dark, to beg a morsel of meal and water, a night's shelter, and a few hours' rest. My name is Thomas Harkness of Lockerben, where my forebears have lived for these three hundred years bygane; and its e'en a right sair case that, wi' thae grey hairs and wrinkles, I should be compelled to sleep wi' the peaseweep, and to sup wi' the fox on the mountain fell."

"Indeed, and sae it is," responded Marion; "and welcome, thrice welcome, I trow, are ye, or ony o' the name and the lineage o' the Harknesses, to puir Marion Morrison's best; and, oh, that it was better, for your sake! Ye hae forgotten the bit whilking lassie, nae doubt, that drave oot yer worthy faither's stirks to the calf-park and back again, that helpit the mistress wi' the bairns, and whiles scrapit potatoes, and sic like. Weel, that bit young, thoughtless cummer, is now the auld, decrepit body—bonny May, as yer mither used to ca' me, is now auld Marion, wham the folks hereabout deeply suspect o' witchcraft, and I kenna what ither craft, I'm turned sae unwarl and pookit-like. But, May, my bairn, the guid man's sleeping wi' downright fatigue. Get on the pot; there's a wee pickle barley in the auld barrel, and there's a bit o' the meat that I was keeping for our Sabbath meal; but the Lord is a rich provider, and we winna want; sae just put in the bit meat wi' the barley, and get broth and mutton for my auld master's son. The mashlom bannock is amang the meal, in the kist. Bring it oot, wi' a bit saut butter, in the meantime; for, O, sirs! hunger's ill to bide. But, dear, and be wi' me! if the guidman bena as sound as a tap! It wad be a'maist a pity to waken him, till the broth pot be fairly set a poppling at least."

May executed her mother's orders with alacrity; and, ere an hour had escaped, Thomas Harkness was aroused to a most delicious meal, which he devoured more like a famished wolf than a Christian man; not, however, hungry and ravenous as he was, before doffing his blue bonnet, and asking of his Maker a blessing with the offered mercy. He was soon after conveyed ben the house, and put into possession of the only bed which the cottage contained; the mother and daughter sleeping and watching alternately, the one in a large elbow chair, and the other upon a sack of tarry-woo. Day dawned, beautiful and sweet, over the wild mountains of Leadhills, and May Douglas stood without the low and confined door of her little cottage, when she was startled by the firing of muskets on the opposite hill-side. The smoke directed her eye to the spot, and she saw a poor boy, who had been running hard for the old shafts, fall immediately forward amongst the long rank heather. "Let the cursed dog lie there and bleed to death," was uttered aloud, in the most horrid tone of voice. "Where the watch has been set, the enemy

must be lurking; we'll search, my lads, the village from corner to corner; and, if we cannot start the game otherwise, we'll put a blazing peat to it, and smoke out the old fox from his den." It was manifest to May Douglas that Thomas Harkness was now placed in the utmost jeopardy; and she flew ben the house, and, with that unconsciousness of impropriety so natural to her age and innocence, immediately roused the guidman of Lockerben, and made him sensible of his situation. What was to be done?—An instant more, and all might be lost. It struck the good girl that there was an old shaft mouth within a few yards of the back part of the house into which the pursued fugitive might pass through a window, or bole, which opened, to let out the smoke and *in* the light, backwards. No sooner thought of than said—and Thomas, with the greater part of his clothing under his arm, thrust himself through the opening with some difficulty, and found himself in a second or two within the hiding of the old shaft. In an instant after, the house was surrounded, and armed men, with swords and holster pistols, rushed into the house of this poor unprotected woman.

"Turn out the old b—— with her whelp," said Clavers to the band, "and cast her Bible and Psalm-Book after, that she may amuse herself and her beauty, whilst we secure the stray sheep of the house of Israel. So ho! here is trail, here is trail! tally-ho!—a shepherd's plaid, and a pair of good large shoes, well soled and tacketed. The guidman himself is not far off—he will be at his devotions, Rob; see you do not disturb him, you unmannerly rascal."

"Oh no," replied the well-known corporal, Rob Douglas. "I will only join in the psalmody." And then he bawled out, in stentorian whine, mimicking the voice and manner of a Covenanter—

> 'In Judah's land God is well-known,
> His name in Israel great,
> In Salem is his tabernacle,
> In Zion is his seat.'

But no, no, my sweet chick of canticles, not so fast, dear, not so fast—neither you nor old grunty must budge a foot-length from the place where you now stand—sit or lie, as you please—till you get permission from this here person with the King's authority on both his shoulders."

In the meantime, everything in the house had been turned topsy-turvy, and the eleventh commandment, as they facetiously denominated the broadsword, had been passed through all manner of pierceables; when, enraged at being foiled of his prey when so nearly securing it, Clavers ordered the hut to be set on fire, and the old hunks to be thrown into the midst of it. "As to this young chick," said he, giving her chin a rude blow upwards, "why, I do not know that I shall burn her till Halloween, and then she will skip and flame on the hearth-stane amongst the nuts."

No sooner said than done—the house was immediately set fire to at all the four corners, whilst the brutal soldiery stood round watching, and making sport of some mice, whom their instinct led to escape. Marion Morrison was actually in the rude hands of the soldiers, when fear of the consequences, or, it may be, something resembling humanity, led Clavers to give orders to let the b—— live, to plague the whole village for half a century to come

In the meantime, Mr Robert Ramsay, the manager of the lead-mines, appeared, to remonstrate with Clavers for his very unhandsome treatment of the women, and his destruction of property which belonged to the family of Hopetoun. It being the time, too, when the workmen shifted their labours, the hill-side poured forth its fifties and hundreds, as if it had actually teemed with life. Clavers and his men were immediately surrounded with a grim and an incensed crowd, headed by their much esteemed manager—the father, as was afterwards the case of the celebrated Allan Ramsay, who thus celebrates the place of his birth—

> "Of Crawford Moor—born in Leadhill—
> Where mineral springs Glengonner fill,
> Which joins sweet-flowing Clyde,
> Between auld Crawford Lindsay's towers,
> And where Duneaton rapid pours
> His stream to Glotta's tide."

In vain did Ramsay remonstrate with Clavers. He boasted his Orders in Council; defied all remonstrance; ordered his men to charge; and, firing on the crowd right and left, made his escape to the hills. Providentially no one was even hurt; and it was strongly suspected that, knowing he had already rather exceeded his commission, he had ordered the dragoons to charge without ball-cartridge. After this affair was over, the district was freed, for a time, from the hateful presence of the King's troops, as they were known to be occupied on a similar office in Annandale, and the higher district of Nithsdale.

Thomas Harkness being duly informed of his safety, came forth from his hiding, which was nearly covered over by spret and long heather, and was welcomed (though not without apprehension) to the manager's dwelling, which stood then, where the manager's house still stands, in the midst of the town, and was and still is surrounded by trees—the only ones to be seen for many miles around. The old woman, Marion Morrison, with her bonny May, were likewise taken home to the same hospitable dwelling, till some arrangement could be made, with the generous and noble-minded family of Hopetoun, for their future accommodation. Mr Robert Ramsay was a young, unmarried man of family—as his name implies—and he felt the impropriety of keeping a young, unmarried woman under his roof. Whether it was that he and May understood each other before this time, or that their unexpected juxtaposition, now accelerated the consummation, I know not; but so it was, that, in a few days, preparations were agoing forward of a somewhat demonstrative nature. A fine black-faced sheep was killed; ale barrels were seen travelling up Glengonner; four dozen of good port wine were placed on the side-board, whilst a cask of strong Nantz brandy slept quietly beneath. On Sabbath, the names of Robert Ramsay and May Douglas, both of this parish, were read aloud by the precentor, schoolmaster, and manager's clerk; and the Friday following was fixed upon for the marriage.

Any festivity amongst these congregated children of the mountains, is anticipated by them with peculiar relish and excitement. Miles beneath the ground, the voice of joy and jest, and colloquy, penetrated; and, whilst the jumper penetrated the rock, and the hammer fell ponderous and frequent, the tongue was not idle, and the heart was not sad. Every one spoke well of the bride; most of them knew her father and esteemed him. Old Marion, to be sure, was a *quisquis* character; but then, she was now to be the manager's stepmother, honest man; and it was deemed that, if ever old Marion had dealt with the old gentleman, she would now prefer the young one. The long-looked-for, wished-for day, at last arrived, and the nonconforming minister of the parish of Crawford—the godly Mr Austin—was brought from his retreat, at the town of Douglas, to perform the marriage ceremony. All was gay as a marriage bell; the men had a full holiday, by order of Lord Hopetoun, with full wages, on the occasion. They, with their wives and daughters, were all arranged on the green plot in front of the manager's house; whilst viands, of a most substantial nature, were served out to them in abundance—amongst which, sheep-heads, haggises, and Irish stews, were not forgotten. The tankards circulated; the wine was handed round in queghs and skuties, or timber shells; and brandy followed in abundance. The heart of the poor labourer was gladdened;

whilst, glowing as it did with gratitude and kindly feeling, it was made better; and the young and handsome couple walked round amongst the people with pride and honest delight. One mother was sad, because her son lay still in a bed of sickness. He had fallen when wounded (as was before mentioned) on the hill, and, having been shot through the knee-joint, his wound was long of healing—still there was a certainty that, though lame for life, he would not die of the injury, and the mother ventured out, though with a clouded aspect. A Highland bagpiper made his appearance, (probably from a previous arrangement,) and, having taken his seat and his draught—

"He screwed his pipes, and gart them skirl,
Till glen and mountain a' did dirl."

The lads sprung to their feet—

"Wi' wooer babs
At their blue-bonnet lugs."

"The lasses—bonny witches—
Were a' dressed up in aprons clean,
And braw white Sunday mutches."

So to it they went; and round and round the green they reeled it, and country-danced it, and shouted it, and flapped it, and jumped it—and

"Haverel Jean her hanging stocking ties,
And to the dance with maddening fury flies,"

till nature could hold out no longer, and wearied limbs were stretched out full length on the soft greensward. In the meantime, *in* came two pilgrims from the Holy Land, and they spoke of Eastern lands and Eastern manners; and, being wearied with travel, they behoved to partake of the cheer. Next to them succeeded Auld Glenae, tied all round with straw ropes, and making love to every bonny lassie present, clapping the old women on the back, and kissing the young lasses. Even Thomas Harkness has laid aside, for a season, his nonconformity, and absolutely foots it away with old Marion Morrison. Laughter goes round in peals, and punch in pailfuls; and the jolly god shakes his sides as he contemplates his happy worshippers. Never did Mount Nysa resound to more genuine revelment. But whom have we here? A horseman—a dragoon! Let me look through the trees. Oh, my God! we are surrounded by a troop of horse, and all means of resistance or escape is cut off from us! Clavers advances very coolly into the midst of the festive circle; and, making his obeisance in the most polite manner, takes up a full tankard, and drinks to the health of the new-married couple—nay, nothing will serve him but he must dance a reel with the bride, who, though reluctant, is forced to comply. Then, turning round, in the most playful manner, to Mr Robert Ramsay—

"I know," said he, "you are an honest man, and a true, and trouble yourself mighty little with conformity or nonconformity; and, therefore, my business is not with you. As to you, Mr Austin, your day is coming; but the pear is not ripe yet. I have my eyes upon you; and the first conventicle which you hold at the old town of Douglas shall seal your fate. At present, you are free. But with you, Mr Thomas Lockerbie, I must hold some private communing; and, with the permission of this jolly company, and with all thanks to our hospitable entertainers, we shall now withdraw. Soldiers, see the prisoner secured, and his hands tied firm behind his back. Bundle him up there behind the sergeant. One file on each side, and one behind! All ready! March!"

The next appearance which poor Thomas Harkness made was in the Grassmarket of Edinburgh, where he emitted the testimony to be found in Wodrow—(Burns' edition, vol. iv., p. 68.)

Chap. XX.—The Shoes Reversed.

The banks of the Liddel are green, peaceful, and productive. The stream itself is all which a pastoral stream ever ought to aspire to: it is neither turbid nor calm; neither precipitous nor sluggish. When chafed, indeed, by the flood, it can assert, and boldly, its independence; and, sometimes, just by way of shewing its strength and general forbearance, you may see a haystack, or a stray sheep, floating on the railway of its current. But, in general, it winds its course along a narrow, indeed, but a sweet pastoral valley, with all becoming moderation, and even modesty—retiring occasionally, like the coquette in Virgil, *ad salices*; and, like her too, *cupiens ante videri*; now passing from behind a steep, and again trotting it off in graceful and visible windings. Yet, peaceful and beautiful as this Scottish Tempe now is, it was for ages the scene of rapine, blood, and battle—of all those Border feuds which, from age to age, concentrated on this point, till the waters of the Liddel ran red, and its green banks were dyed with the blood of vassal and lord, of Scotchman and Englishman, of Douglas, Hume, Howard, Graham, and Percy. During these bold and stirring times, characters were formed which remained long after reiving had ceased. The Elliot, the Armstrong, the Jardine, and the Johnstone, entailed upon their posterity a spirit of fearless independence and wassail hospitality, which remains, though in a greatly diluted state, to this hour. At the time to which this narrative points, it was still in full vigour; and the incidents of the story are illustrative of such a character.

The property of Whithaugh has been in the possession of the ancestors of the venerable and kind-hearted present proprietor for at least four centuries. Its produce has always been sufficient for the necessaries, and even some of the luxuries of life; and, what is somewhat singular, no miser and no spendthrift has ever increased or diminished its extent. What it was in the days of James V. of Scotland, (who once lodged a night in the mansion-house,) it continues to be. The rental may be somewhat about £600 per annum; and, with the income free and unincumbered, the present proprietor is just as rich as he wishes to be, and can afford to exercise that immemorial bias towards hospitality for which the Elliots of Whithaugh are, and have always been, quite celebrated. My tale—which is, indeed, too true in all its general outline—I heard, a few years ago, from old Elliot himself, in the presence of the worthy minister of Castleton, my old and good friend, the Rev. Mr Barton, to whom I can safely appeal for the truth of the facts related.

Sir James Johnstone of Westerhall was a well-known persecutor during the reign of the detestable Second Charles, and, as his mansion was at no great distance from Liddesdale, he treated himself occasionally to a Border chase, as he termed it—riding with a troop of dragoons up and down the dale, levying heavy fines, and shooting, occasionally, a stray son of the Covenant, as he fled to the cave or the morass. In one of these excursions, Johnstone encountered the Laird of Whithaugh's poor, fatuous brother, who had, by some means, escaped into the mountains from the hands of a stout man, to whose care and protection the inoffensive, but perfectly fatuous creature was committed. Archy Elliot (known in the neighbourhood by the familiar designation, "*A but* Archy," from his commencing every sentence with the words "A but") had wandered into a mountain dell, and, at last, unable to extricate himself, he had sat down to rest him upon a rock, which overhung a small stream, over which the branches of the rowan tree, or mountain ash, were spread. Johnstone and his party were in quest, at the time, of poor Gilbert Watson, against whom the curate of the parish of

Applegirth had lodged an information, on the score of his having got his child baptized by the lately ousted minister of the parish. Gilbert had been compelled to betake him to the mountain passes on this account, and was supposed to have taken up his abode in what was called "Fox Den," on the water of Tarras. Johnstone immediately dismounted from his horse, (upon seeing the figure of a man by the stream-side,) and, with two dragoons to assist him, proceeded to descend into the hollow where poor Archy Elliot was seated.

"Hollo!" vociferated Johnstone, in a loud and harsh tone of voice—"hollo! brother brush-the-heather, what have we here? A Bible, no doubt, and a psalm-tune, and Covenanting dirge, made up of profanity and high treason in equal proportions. Stir your stumps, old Gibby! Ye're wanted, man, by the guidwife. She can get nae rest without you; and the vile, roaring *get* which ye sae lately made a Christian o', took a taste o' the cauler air this morning at the top o' Sergeant Pagan's sword. Look, man! glour, man!—you, Gibby, wi' or without the *girds*—there's the blood o' the yelping brat on the sword yet. Pat Pagan tells me it won't come off; so we'll e'en see if the Tarras water winna wash it oot"—pulling the sword out of the hands of the grim sergeant, and swinging it backwards and forwards in the adjoining pool.

In the meantime, Daft Archy had sprung to his feet, and was staring wildly at the company by which he was surrounded.

"A but, man—a but, man—I'm Archy, ye ken—Archy Elliot, ye ken—a but, no kill Archy—a but—a but—a but!" &c.

"None of your Whiggery slang here, ye manting, shamming fool! D'ye think we dinna see that all this foolery is put on, man? D'ye think we dinna ken Gibby Watson o' the Goosedub? Men, do your duty, and secure the traitor!"

Thus saying, the dragoons were proceeding to execute their orders, when one of them interfered, and assured his Honour thar he was mistaken in the person—for this was the daft brither o' the Laird o' Whithaugh, "owre by yonder."

"Elliot o' Whithaugh!" exclaimed Johnstone, with a demoniacal grin. "Auld, canting, traitor-hiding Elliot! I have a good mind to set his house in a lunt about his lugs, and toss this lump of idiocy into the fire, just to beet the flame. Tie the creature with cords to a tree, and let us proceed to Elliot's of Whithaugh. It is a thousand to one that 'Gibby God-be-thanked' is not snugly lodged in the laird's pantry; or, maybe, luggit into the heart o' a peat-stack."

Altogether reckless of the screams and struggles of the poor innocent, away the party scampered, as if on a holiday excursion, towards the old house of Whithaugh. It had rained hard over night, and the Liddel was running dark, smooth, and foam-belled. Instead, however, of going about a mile round by the old stone bridge, the whole party dashed at once fearlessly into the swollen stream, and made furiously forward towards the opposite bank. The bank however was steep; and, as Sergeant Pagan's horse was trying to clear an ascent of some feet, it fairly fell back, with its rider beneath, into the turbid and boiling water. At once rider and man were tumbled over by the flood, and lodged in a deep pool under a steep cliff, some yards lower down. The horse and man, for some time, seemed entangled with each other; but, at last, the horse escaped, and made for the further shore, which was shelvy and hard. The man was never again seen alive. His body was afterwards found some miles lower down. Having ascertained that one of his troop—one of the most tried and trustworthy—in other words, of the most cruel and daring—had paid the forfeit of his own temerity, Johnstone uttered a curse or two in reference to the departed's soul, and swore that he would make old Whithaugh suffer for this. Up, accordingly, the band trotted towards the front door, which faced southward upon a green lawn. But, upon demanding entrance, he was told from a window that none would be permitted. In fact, the party had been seen advancing, and their purpose guessed at; and Whithaugh had resolved, by the assistance of two stout sons, an only daughter of singular beauty, and nearly half-a-dozen ploughmen, to defend Gilbert Watson and his own premises by force. This altered somewhat the aspect of things; and Johnstone, after bestowing his usual allowance of curses upon the old man, the house, and all its inmates, drew from his pocket what he termed a "Lauderdale," or high commission, by which he was entitled to search out, sack, and, if necessary, put to the sword all manner of traitors and conventiclers in these parts. Having read as it were the "riot act," he was proceeding to open the front door by force, when poor Archy was heard fast approaching under the conduct of his keeper.

"A but, a but," said Archy—"a but—no kill, no kill—ah, but tie—ah, but tie—tree! tree! tree!"—pointing to the trees which surrounded the green.

"Give the old cutter a broadside," said Johnstone, retreating from the door to give freedom to the men; and immediately the whole front windows were lying in shining fragments inside and outside of the apartments. Luckily, seeing the preparation that was made, everybody had stood aside from the windows, and no one in the house was injured. His keeper had a strong hold of Archy, and was endeavouring to keep him out of harm's way, by thrusting his back against a tree in the orchard, when, by a sudden effort, he escaped, and, armed with a pitchfork, which he had found in the stack-yard, he rushed instantly upon the assailants, lodging the weapon in the flanks of one of the trooper's horses, ere his rider could turn him round. This so incensed the soldier, that he instantly pulled out his holster pistol, and shot the poor half-witted creature through the head. He fell, repeating his well-known exclamation, "a but," and was dead in an instant.

Seeing how matters were going on without, old Whithaugh, who had hitherto acted merely upon the defensive, discharged a fowling-piece, which he had ready loaded, at the captain of the band. The ball grazed his bridle hand, and blood followed the slight injury. This so incensed the leader that he immediately ordered the stack-yard and out-houses to be set fire to, vowing that if the traitor were not given up, he would burn down the Ha' house likewise, and not leave a combustible unconsumed about the steading. Already had the poor cattle begun to roar at the stake, and the hens and turkeys to escape from the flaming stack-yard, when out Whithaugh issued surrounded by his resolute supporters, armed with grapes, pitch-forks, and such other lethal weapons as the place and the occasion admitted of. Seeing matters come to this pass, poor Gilbert, who had actually been built up into a hay-stack, the farther extremity of which was now on fire, immediately sprung forth, and, throwing himself betwixt the combatants, called aloud for an armistice, and at once offered to surrender. Meanwhile, the fair but distracted Helen Elliot rushed likewise betwixt the parties, and prayed, on her knees, that her father's grey hairs might be spared. This somewhat altered the state of matters. The cattle were got extricated from the burning—in some cases the flames were extinguished—and, Johnstone having gained his object, though at the expense of life and much valuable property, gave orders for a retreat. Placing poor Gilbert Watson upon a dragoon's saddle, in a very inconvenient position, whilst the rider sat comfortably in the saddle behind him, and bestowing some extravagant, but unwelcome praises upon the personal charms of fair Helen—the whole party, with the exception of the wounded horse, which was speared to death, and the man who had lost his life in the water, marched up the dale, being resolved that, now at

least, they should not risk their lives in the swollen flood. There stood at this time, and probably there stands still, a little public-house at the bridge, and about half a-mile from the manse of Castleton. Into this public-house the party betook themselves, to refresh, whilst the curate of Castleton was sent for, to have an interview with Johnstone, to whom he was intimately known, and to whom he had often given private information respecting the poor HIDING people, who fled to the mountain and glen, and the moss and the cave, for life and for conscience-sake. This curate of Castleton was a somewhat singular personage in appearance. He gave one a pretty correct idea of Æsop. He was a little bandy-legged body, with a large aquiline nose, a hunched back, and a most sinister squint. His church, indeed, was deserted, unless by the family in the small change-house, and one or two farmers, who, for fear of suspicion and consequent spoliation, were in the habit of occasionally attending. He, like his neighbours of the curacy, had been imported, *ready made*, from Aberdeen, with all its strange dialect, and all its stranger leanings to oppression and Episcopacy. Just at the moment when Johnstone's messenger arrived at the manse, then situated high up the hill, upon the brink of a precipice, the curate was in private converse with a person who was giving him the important information, that a conventicle was this very evening to be held at the Dead-Water—a large mountain-moss, situated on the Borders, and giving rise to the river Tyne on the one side, and the Liddel on the other. This information having been obtained, the curate, commonly designated Clatterwallet, hastened away, in company with Johnstone's messenger, for the Brig change-house. An interview with Johnstone was immediately obtained; and, in a few minutes, orders were given to his men to hold themselves in readiness to march. Meanwhile the prisoner, Watson, was put under the guardianship of a dragoon, and lodged in a small byre attached to the gavel of the dwelling-house. Several attempts were made, by *seeming* travellers, to get the soldier withdrawn from his station, but they proved ineffectual. Meantime, the night began to darken in, with a soft falling snow-shower, which rendered the ground all white around. Poor Gilbert Watson had said his prayers, sung the 121st Psalm, and was preparing to rest himself, with a cow and her calf for his companions, when he thought he heard a voice whispering to him from the roof of the thatched byre. It was indeed a voice, and a friendly one; for it said, "*Here! Here!*" A staff was thrust through a small aperture in the thatch. Gilbert moved towards the place, and heard, in whispers exceedingly low, that an opening in the roof was about to be made for his escape. Meanwhile, Gilbert kept constantly moving about, so that the watch at the door might be assured that he was still in his keeping. All at once, when a hole large enough had been made, Gilbert was pulled up by the arms and shoulders, and carried on the back of a strong man, with amazing velocity, down the glen. The soldier had heard the noise which this occasioned, and immediately hailed his prisoner. No answer being returned, he entered, and discovered at once the trick which had been played upon him. He immediately *rounded* the byre; but, in doing so, felt his feet entangled in a strong rope, which, when he had put down his hands to disentangle, he was caught by the waist in a strong fox-trap. This made him roar aloud for help; but ere the innkeeper could give him the desired assistance, the prisoner had considerable time to escape. In fact, in noiseless speed, the strong man had borne Gilbert to a considerable distance, and then setting him down, he *untied his shoes, and putting the heels foremost, fastened them thus reversed by strings to his feet.* "Now," said the voice, in parting—"now for Castle-Hermitage and its dungeon! till to-morrow morning, when assistance will be rendered." And, saying thus, the strong man took his immediate departure, and disappeared amongst the woods. Poor Gilbert did as he was instructed, and, in about an hour, reached the dismal solitude of Castle-Hermitage. There, on some straw which still remained from the time when poor Sir Alexander Ramsay of Dalhousie had been starved to death by Sir William Douglas, did this poor persecuted man remain till the following morning. In the meantime, Johnstone having discovered that he had been sent on a fool's errand, and that no such meeting was about to take place, as the curate had been advertised of, at the Dead-Water-Moss, returned in no very good humour—first, to the manse of Castleton, from which he proposed ejecting the curate over the precipice, which lay underneath his window, and then, about midnight, to the inn, at the Brig-end of Liddel Water. Here his rage was converted into fury at the trick which had now manifestly been played upon him; and he stamped, and swore, and blasphemed during the remainder of the night; drinking, however, and eating mutton ham, by turns, and warning his men that, so soon as day broke, they should give chase to the old fox. Day broke, and chase was given. Some were dismissed in one direction, and some in another; and, as the snow had been undisturbed from the time of the escape till morning, it was naturally guessed that the footsteps of the pursued might still be traced. Accordingly Johnstone, with three of his men, set out in the track from the back of the byre, and made sure work of it till they came to the bottom of the glen—their footsteps were confused, and the party seemed to have made off towards Whithaugh. Having, however, despatched a strong body to trace those footsteps, Johnston and his men rode immediately over the rising ground, and came down at once on the old towers of Castle-Hermitage. Here the truth appeared to be manifest. There were double footsteps—those of one approaching and one departing—and the inference was immediately drawn, that the pursued had betaken himself to the castle keep, but had again effected his escape. In fact, the strong man of last evening had advanced, towards morning, with provisions and refreshment to the dungeon; and his shoes being nailed and formed very much like those of Gilbert, they very naturally took the two foot prints, the one advancing and the other retreating, for one—and off they set at full gallop—whilst Gilbert and one of Whithaugh's ploughmen made the best of their way in the opposite direction, and ultimately separated within sight of Hawick—the honest ploughman returning, not a little satisfied with his dexterity, to the broad and fertile acres of Whithaugh; whilst Gilbert Watson ultimately reached some friends who lived in the Cowgate of Edinburgh—by which means he escaped.

The shoes which contributed so greatly to the escape of Gilbert Watson, were presented as a memorial to the family of Elliot, and are still shewn to the curious in such matters, by the present hospitable and worthy proprietor of Whithaugh. It was remarked, that, after this unfortunate *raid*, Johnstone became morose and peevish, beyond his usual; seemed to suffer great mental agony; and was one morning found dead in his bed. Helen Elliot, the fair maid of Whithaugh, was wooed and won by a Charteris of Empsfield; and from her are the present honourable family of that title descended. So ends my Hysteron Proteron, "or the Shoes Reversed."

WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

SKETCHES FROM A SURGEON'S NOTE-BOOK.

Chap. XV.—The Monomaniac.

In some of my prior papers, I have had occasion to make some oblique references to that disease called *pseudoblepsis imaginaria*—in other words, a vision of objects not present. Cullen places it among local diseases, as one of a depraved action of the organs contributing to vision; whereby, of course, he would disjoin it from those cases of madness where a depraved action of the brain itself produces the same effect. In this, Cullen displays his ordinary acuteness; for we see many instances where there is a fancied vision of objects not present, without insanity; and, indeed, the whole doctrine of spirits has latterly been founded on this distinction.* From the very intimate connection, however, which exists between the visual organs and the brain itself, it must always be a matter of great difficulty—if indeed, in many cases, it be not entirely impossible—to make the distinction available; for there are cases—such as that of the conscience-spectre, and those that generally depend upon thoughts and feelings of more than ordinary intensity—that seem to lie between the two extremes of merely diseased visual organs and diseased brains; and, in so far as my experience goes, I am free to say that I have seen more cases of imaginary vision of distant objects, resulting from some terrible excitement of the emotions, than from the better defined causes set forth by the medical writers. Among the passions and emotions, again, that, in their undue influence over the same condition of the mind, are most likely to give rise to the diseased vision of *phantasmæ*, I would be inclined to place that which usually exerts so much absorbing power over the young female heart. The cause lies on the surface. In the case of the passions—of anger, revenge, fear, and so forth—the feeling generally works itself out; and, in many cases, the object is so unpleasant that the mind seeks relief from it, and flies it; while, in the emotions of love, there is a morbid brooding over the cherished image that takes hold of the fancy; the object is called up by the spell of the passion placed before the mind's eye, and held there for hours, days, and years, till the image becomes almost a stationary impression, and is invested with all the attributes of a real presence. I do not feel that I would be justified in saying that I am able to substantiate the remark I have now made by many cases falling under my own observation; the examples of *monomania* in sane persons are not very often to be met with; and I have heard many of my professional brethren say, that they never experienced a single instance in all their practice.

The case I am now to detail, occurred within two miles of the town of ——. The patient was a lady, Mrs C——, an individual of a nervous, irritable temperament, and possessed of a glowing fancy, that, against her will, brought up by-past scenes with a distinctness that was painful to her. She had lately returned from India, whither she had accompanied her husband, whom she left buried in a deep watery grave in the channel of the Mozambique. I had been attending her for a nervous ailment, which had shattered her frame terribly, while it increased the powers of her creative fancy, as well as the sensibility by which the mental images were invested with their chief powers over her. She suffered also from a tenderness in the *retina*, which forced her to shun the light. How this latter complaint was associated with the other, I cannot explain, unless upon the principle which regulates the connection between the sensibility of the eye and the heated brains of those who labour under inflammation of that organ. I was informed by her mother, Mrs L——, as well as her sister, that she had come from India a perfect wreck, both of mind and body; and, for a period of eighteen months afterwards, could scarcely be prevailed upon to see any of her friends—shutting herself up for whole days in her room, the windows of which were kept dark, to prevent the light, which operated like a sharp sting, from falling upon her irritable eyes. It was chiefly with a view to the removal of this opthalmic affection, that I was requested to visit her; and I could very soon perceive, that the visionary state of her mind was closely connected with the habit of dark seclusion to which she was necessitated to resort, for the purpose of avoiding the pain produced by the rays of the sun. On my first interview, I found her sitting alone in the darkened room, brooding over thoughts that seemed to exert a strong influence over her; but she soon joined me in a conversation, which, diverging from the subject of her complaint, embraced topics that brought out the peculiarity of her mind—a strong enthusiastic power of portraying scenes of grief, which she had witnessed, and which, as she proceeded, seemed to rise before her with almost the vividness of presence; yet, with her, judgment was as strong and healthy as that of any day-dreamer among the wide class of mute poets, of whom there are more in the world than of philosophers.

I could not detect properly her ailment, and resolved to question her mother alone.

"Did you not notice anything peculiar about my daughter?" she said.

"The love of a shaded room, resulting from an irritability in the organs of sight, is to me no great rarity," I replied.

"Though her fit has not been upon her," rejoined she, with an air of melancholy, "it is not an hour gone since her scream rung shrilly through this house, as if she had been in the hands of fiends; and, to be plain with you, I left you to discover yourself what may be too soon apparent. I fear for her mind, sir."

"I have seen no reason for the apprehension; but her scream, was it not bodily pain?"

"I could wish that it had been mere bodily pain; but it was not. You have not heard Isabella's history," she continued, in a low, whispering tone. "She has experienced what might have turned the brain of any one. I discovered something extraordinary in her about six months ago. One evening, when the candles were shaded for the relief of her eyes, and I and Maria were sitting by her, she stopped suddenly in the midst of our conversation, and sat

* Hibbert's "Philosophy of Apparitions"—Brewster's "Letters on Natural Magic"—Scott's "Letters on Witchcraft," &c.

gazing intensely at something between her and the wall; pointing out her finger, her mouth open, and scarcely drawing her breath. I was terror-struck; for the idea immediately rushed into my mind, that it was a symptom of insanity; but I had no time for thought—a scream burst from her, and she fell at my feet in a faint. When she recovered, she told us that she had seen, in the shaded light of the candle, which assumed the blue tinge of the moonlight, the figure of a dead body sitting upright in the waters, with the sailcloth in which he was committed to the deep wrapped around him, and his pale face directed towards her. At the recollection of the vision, she shuddered, would not recur to the subject again, but betrayed otherwise no wandering of the fancy. Several times since, the same object has presented itself to her; and, what is extraordinary, it is always when the candle is shaded; yet she exhibits the same judgment, and I could never detect the slightest indication of a defect in the workings of her mind. I sent for you to treat her eyes, and left it to you to see if you could discover any symptoms of a diseased mind."

"Was the object she thus supposes present to her, ever exposed in reality to the true waking sense?" said I, suspecting a case of *monomania*.

"Did she not tell you?" rejoined she. "Come."

And leading me again into her daughter's darkened apartment, she whispered something in her ear, retired, and left us together.

"Your mother informs me, madam," said I, "that you have seen *what exists not;* and I am anxious, from professional reasons, to know from yourself whether I am to attribute it to the creative powers of an active fancy, or to an affection of the visual organs, that I have read more of than I have witnessed."

She started; and I saw I had touched a tender part—probably that connected with her own suspicions that her mother and sister deemed her insane.

"It was for this purpose, then, that you have been called to see me?" she replied, hastily. "It is well; I shall be tested by one who at least is not prejudiced. My mother and sister think that I am deranged. I need not tell you that I consider myself sane, although I confess that this illusion of the sense, to which I am subjected, makes me sometimes suspicious of myself. Will you listen to my story?"

I replied that I would; and thus she began:—

"Experience, sir, is a world merely to those who live in it—it exists not—its laws cannot be communicated to the heart of youth; the transfusion of the blood of the aged into the veins of the young, is not more vain than the displacing of the hopes of the young and ardent mind by the cold freezing maxims of what man has felt, trembled to feel, and wished he could have anticipated, that he might have been prepared for it. Such has ever been, such is, such will ever be, the history of the sons and daughters of Adam. What but the changes into which I—still comparatively a young woman—have passed—not it would almost seem mutations of the same principle, but rather new states of existence—could have wrung from a heart, where hope should still have lighted her lamp, and illuminated my paths, these sentiments of a dearly purchased experience? When I and George Cunningham, my schoolfellow, my first and last lover, and subsequently my husband, passed those brilliant days of youth's sunshine among the green holms and shaggy dells of ——; following the same pursuits—conning the same lessons—indulging in the same dreams of future happiness, and training each other's hearts into a community of feeling and sentiment, till we seemed one being actuated by the same living principle: in how happy a state of ignorance of those changes that awaited me in the world, did I exist? I would fall into the hackneyed strain of artificial fiction writing, were I to portray the pleasures of a companionship and love that had its beginning in the very first impulses of feeling; with a view to set off by contrast the subsequent events that awaited us, when our happiness should have been realized.

When a woman of sensibility says she loves a man, she has told, through a medium that works out the conditions of the responding powers of our common nature, the heart, more than all the eulogistic eloquence of the tongue could achieve, to shew the estimate she forms of the qualities of the object of her affections; but, when she adds that that love originated in the friendship of children, grew with the increase of the powers of mind and body, and entered as a part into every feeling that actuated the young hearts, she has expressed the terms of an endearment so pure, tender, exclusive, and lasting, that it transcends all the ordinary forms of the communion of spirits on earth. The attachment is different from all others—it stands by itself; and to endeavour to conceive its purity and force, by any factitious mixture of friendship, and the ordinary endearments of limited time and favourable circumstances of meeting, would be as vain as all hypothetical investigation into the nature of feeling must ever be. I cannot tell when I first knew the young man whose name I have mentioned under an emotion that shakes my frame; the syllables were a part of my early lispings, and I cannot yet think that they are unconnected with a being that has now no local habitation upon earth. Our parents were intimate neighbours; and the woods and waters of ——, if their voices—sweeter than articulated intelligence—could imitate the accents of man, would tell best when they wooed us into that communion, which they cherished, and witnessed, with an apparent participation of our joy, to open into an early affection. The power of mutual objects of pleasure and interest, especially if they are a part of the lovely province of nature—the rural landscape, secluded and secreted from the eyes of all the world besides, with its dells and fountains, birds and flowers—in increasing the attachment of young hearts, has been often observed and described; but we felt it. These inanimate objects are generally, and were to us, not only a tie, but they shared a part of our love as if in some mysterious way they had become connected with, and a part of us. The often imputed association of ideas is a poor and inadequate solution of this work of nature: it is the effect put for the cause; the common boasted philosophy of man, who invents terms of familiar sound to explain secrets eternally hidden from him. If we who felt, as few have ever felt, the influence of these green, umbrageous shades—with their nut-trees, bushes, flowers, and gowany leas; their singing birds, and nests with speckled eggs; their half-concealed fountains of limpid water, and running streams, and beds of white pebbles—in nourishing and increasing our young loves, could not tell how or why they were invested with such power; the philosopher, I deem, may resign the task, and say, with a sigh, that it was nature, and nature alone, who did all this; and the secret will remain unexplained.

We enjoyed ten years of this intercourse—I calculate from the fifth to the fifteenth year of our youth—and every one of these years, as it evolved the ripening powers of our minds, so it strengthened the mingling affections of our hearts. We became lovers long before we knew the sanctions and rights, and duties of pledged faith; we were each other's by a troth, a thousand times spoken; exchanged and felt in the throbbing embrace, the burning sighs, and the eloquent looks, that were but the natural impulses of a feeling we rejoiced in, yet scarcely comprehended. My heart, recoiling from the thoughts of after years, luxuriates in the memory of these blissful hours; and, were not the theme exhausted a thousand times by the eloquence of rapt feeling, speaking with the tongue of inspiration, I could dwell on these early rejoicings of unsullied spirits for ever.

My dream was not scattered—it was only changed in its form and hues, when my youthful betrothed was removed from ——, to go through a course of navigation to fit him for the service of the sea, to which the intentions of his father, and his own early wishes, led him. I could have doubted my existence sooner than the faith of his heart; and he was only gone to make those preparations for attaining a position in society that would enable him to realize those fond and bright prospects we had indulged in contemplating among the woods that resounded to pledges exchanged in the face of heaven. The first place of his destination was London, from whence, for a period of about three years, I heard from him regularly by letters, which breathed with an increased warmth the same sentiments we had repeated and interchanged so often during the long period of our prior intercourse. Some time after this, he sailed to India; then were my thoughts first tinged by the changing hues of solitude, and my hopes and fears bound to the wayward circumstances of a world which had as yet been to me a paradise.

I heard nothing from him for two long years after he left London. A portrayment of my thoughts during that period would be a thousand times more difficult than for the painter to seize and represent the changing hues of the gem that, thrown on a tropic strand, reflects the endless hues of the earth and sky. I trembled and hoped by turns; but every idea and every feeling were so strongly mingled with reminiscences of former pleasures, the prospects of future happiness, the fears of a change in his affections, or of his death, that I could not pronounce my mind as being, at any given moment, aught but a medium of impressions that I could not seize or fix, so as to contemplate myself. All I can say is, that he was the presiding genius of every emotion with which my heart was influenced; and, to those who have loved, that may be sufficient to shew the utter devotion of every pulse of my being to the deified image enshrined within my bosom. Now came the period of the realizing of my dreams. George Cunninghame came back, and married me.

We had scarcely been two months married, when my husband, whom I loved more and more every day, got, by the interest of powerful friends, the command of a large vessel—the Griffin—engaged in the trade to India. It was arranged that I should accompany him, that, as we had been associated from our earliest infancy, (our separation had been only that of the body, and interfered not with the union of the immaterial essence,) we should still be together. In this resolution I rejoiced; and, though by nature a coward, my love overcame all my terrors of the great deep. The day was fixed for our departure. A lady passenger and two servants were to go with us to the Cape, from whose society I expected pleasure; and every preparation which love could suggest was made to render me happy. We left the Downs on a calm day of December, and went down the Channel with a rattling gale from the north. Life on board of an Indiaman has been a thousand times described; and, would to heaven I had nothing to detail but the ordinary conduct of civilized men! Our chief officer was one Crawley, and our second a person of the name of Buist—the only individual my husband had no confidence in being Hans Kreutz, the steward, a German, who was whispered to have been engaged as a maritime venatic, or pirate, in the West Indies; and, if any man's character might be detected in his countenance, this foreigner's disposition might have been read in lineaments marked by the graver of passion. Part of what I have now said may have been the result of after experience; yet I could perceive shadowings of evil at this time, which I had not the knowledge of human nature to enable me to turn to any account.

With a series of gentle breezes and fine weather we came to the Cape, where Mrs Hardy and her two servants were put ashore. One of the servants had agreed to accompany me to Madras, and was to have come on board again, to join us, before we left Table Bay. Whether she had changed her mind, or been detained by some unforeseen cause, I know not, but the boat came off without her; and all the information that I could get was, that she was not to be found. I trembled to be left on board of a vessel without a female companion, and strongly insisted upon George to delay his departure until another effort should be made to endeavour to find a servant in Cape Town; but, a favourable wind having sprung up at that moment, Crawley remonstrated, in his peculiar mode of abject petitioning; and my husband, having himself seen the advantage of seizing the favourable opportunity for taking and accomplishing the passage of the Mozambique, we departed, under a stiff gale; and, in a short time, reached the middle of that famous Channel, where the fears of the seamen have been so often excited by the reputed cannibalism of the natives of Madagascar. At this time I was strangely beset by nightly visions of terror, which I could impute to no other cause than the stories that George had repeated to me of the wild character of these savages. During the day—but more especially during the blue, sulphurous, flame-coloured twilight of that region—I often fixed my eye on the long, dark, umbrageous coast—followed the ranges of receding heights—threaded the deep recesses of the valleys, that seemed to end in dark caves, and peopled every haunt with festive savages performing their unholy rites over a human victim, destined to form food for creatures bearing that external impress of God's finger which marks the lords of the creation. Those visions were always connected, in some way, with myself; and I could not banish the idea, which clung to me with a morbid power of adherence, that I might, alone and unprotected, be cast into some of these cimmerian recesses, and be subjected to the unutterable miseries of a fate a thousand times worse than death, and what might follow death, by the usages of eaters of human beings. There was no cause for any such apprehensions; and I am now satisfied that these dark creations of my fancy were in some mysterious way connected with a disordered state of my physical economy; but I was not then aware of such predisposing causes of mental gloom, and still brooded over my imagined horrors, till I drove rest and sleep from my pillow, and disturbed my husband with my pictured images of a danger that he said was far removed from me. From him I got some support and relief; but, the faces of the men I saw around me, and especially those of Crawley and Kreutz, seemed, to me, rather to reflect a corroboration of my fears, than to afford me encouragement and support. The grim visions retained their power over me; and, the wind having fallen off almost to a dead calm, I found myself fixed in the very midst of the scenes that thus nourished and perpetuated them. The depression of mind produced by these frightful day-dreams and night-mares, made me sickly and weak. I could scarcely eat any food; every piece of flesh presented to me, reminded me of the feasts of the inhabitants of that dark, dismal island that lay stretching before me in the vapours of a tropical climate, like a land of enchantment called up by fiends from the great deep; the dyspeptic nausea of sickness was the very food of my gloomy thoughts; and the co-operative powers of mind and body tended to the increase of my misery, till I seemed a victim of confirmed hypochondria.

We were still fixed immovably in the same place: all motive powers seemed to have forsaken the elements—the sea was like a sheet of glass, the sails hung loose from the masts, and the men lay listless about, overcome with heat, and yawning in lethargy. It was impossible to keep me below. I required air to keep me breathing, and felt a strange melancholy relief from fixing my eyes on the very

scene of my terrors. Every effort to occupy my mind was vain; and I lay, for hours at a time, with my eyes fixed on the shore, piercing the deep wooded hollows, following the faint traces of the savages as they disappeared among the thick trees, and investing every naked demon with all the characteristics of the followers of the mysterious midnight rites in which I conceived they engaged when the hour of their orgies came. I often saw individuals—rendered gigantic by the magnifying medium of the thick vapour—come down to the beach, and fix their gaze on us for a time, and then pace back again to the wooded recesses. Sometimes, when unable to sleep, I crept up from the cabin, and sat and surveyed the silent scene around me—the hazy moon throwing her thick beams over the calm sea; the dark shadows of unknown birds sailing slowly through the air, and uttering at intervals sounds I had never heard before; the fires of the inhabitants among the trees on the coast, that sent up a long column of red light through the atmosphere, and exhibited the flitting bodies of the naked beings as they danced round the objects of their rites. It is impossible for me, by any language of which I have the power, to convey an adequate conception of my feelings during these hours. They were realities to me; and, therefore, whatever may be said against fanciful creations, I have a right to claim attention to states of the mind and feelings that belong to our nature in certain positions. At a late hour one night, I was engaged in those gloomy watchings and reveries, when Kreutz came to me, and said the captain had been taken suddenly ill. I turned my eyes from the scene along the shore I was surveying, and fixed them for a moment on his face, where the light of the moon sat in deep contrast with the long bushy hair that flowed round his temples. A shudder—that might have been accounted for from the state of my mind and the nature of the communication he had made to me, but which I instinctively attributed, at the time, to the expression of his face—passed over me, and, starting up, I hurried into the cabin off the cuddy, where I found George under the grasp of relentless spasms of the chest and stomach. He was stretched along on the floor, grasping the carpet which he had wound up into a coil, and vomiting violently into a bason which he had hurriedly seized before he fell.

'Good God, Isabella!' he exclaimed, 'what is this? I am dying. That villain Cr'——

And, whether from weakness or prudence, he stopped, with the guttural sound of these two letters, Cr. which applied equally to Crawley as to Kreutz, and left me in doubt which of them he meant. At this moment Buist the mate entered the cabin; and my agitation and the necessity of affording relief to the sufferer, took my mind off the fearful subject hinted at by the broken sentence I had heard. With the assistance of Buist, I got him placed on the bed. There was no doctor on board, and I was left to the suggestions of my own mind, for adopting means to save him. These were applied; but without imparting any relief. The painful symptoms continued, and he got every moment worse. Neither Crawley nor Kreutz appeared; and when Buist went out to bring what was deemed necessary for the patient, I hung over him, and asked him what he conceived to have been the cause of his illness; but my question startled him—he looked up wildly in my face; his mind was directed towards heaven; and the means of salvation through the redeeming influence of a believed divinity of Him who died on the cross, was the subject alone on which he would speak. The scene, at this moment, around me was extraordinary, and, though I cannot say I had any distinct perception of the individual circumstances that combined to make up the sum of my horrors, I can now see, as through a dark medium, the co-operating elements. There was no candle in the cabin; the light of the moon through the windows filling the apartment with a blue glare, and tinging his pallid face with its hues. My mind, wrought up by the dreamy visions I had indulged in previously, and labouring under a disease which imparted to every feeling its own eliminated gloom, saw even the darkest circumstances of my condition in a false and unnatural aspect. The scenes of our youth and early love; the impressions of the religious sentiments he was muttering in broken snatches; the view of his approaching death; the dark means by which it was accomplished; my condition after he should die, in the power of men I feared; the orgies of the natives I had been contemplating; the deep grave, so fearful in its dead calmness; and the monsters that revelled in it, to which he would be consigned—all flitted through my brains; but with such rapidity—driving out, by short energies, the more engrossing thoughts concerned in the manner of his recovery—that I could not particularize them, while I drew, by some synthetic process of the mind, their general attributes, and thus increased the terror of the scene.

Two hours passed, and every moment made it more apparent that my husband was posting to death. There was no sound heard throughout the ship except the dull tread of the watch; and, at intervals, the whispers of Crawley, as he communed stealthily with Buist, who went out of the cabin repeatedly, to carry intelligence of the state of the sufferer. For about three quarters of an hour, he had been raving wildly. The detached words he uttered raised, by their electric power, the working of my fancy, which filled up, by a train of thoughts scarcely more within the province of reason, the chain of his wandering ideas. No connected discourse on the subject of his illness, though mixed up with all the reminiscences of an affection that had lasted since the period of infancy, or the prospects that awaited me in the unprecedented position in which I was about to be thrown, could have distracted me in the manner effected by these insulated vocables, wrung by madness from expiring life and reason. They ring in my ears even yet, when the beams of the moon shine through the casements; and, even now, I think I see that dimly-lighted cabin, and my husband lying before me in the agonies of death. I became, as if by some secret sympathy, as much deranged as himself. As I watched him, I cast rapid looks around me—out upon the still deep, in the direction of the fearful island—upon the articles of domestic use lying in confusion, and exhibiting dimly-illuminated sides and dark shades. It seemed to me some frightful dream; and, when I turned my eyes again on the pale face which had been the object of my excited fancy for so many years, saw the struggles of expiring nature, and heard the wild accents that still came from his parched lips, I screamed, and tore my hair in handfuls from my head. In that condition, I saw him die; and the increase of my frenzy, produced by that consummation of all evils, made me rush out, and forward to the side of the ship. I felt all the stinging madness of the resolution to die—to fly from the man who, I feared, had murdered him—to escape from that island of cannibals, where I thought I would be left by my relentless foes, by plunging into the deep, when Crawley, who had heard of his demise, seized me, and dragged me back.

This paroxysm was succeeded by a kind of stupor that seized my whole mind and body. I sat down on a cot in the side of the cabin, and saw Kreutz bring in a light. The glare of it startled me; but it was only as a vision that could not awake the sleeper. They proceeded to lay out my husband on a table. They undressed him—for his clothes were still on; and I saw them take a large sheet, wrap it round him, and pin it firmly at all the folds. When their labours were finished, they took each a large portion of brandy, and Crawley came forward and offered me a portion. I had no power to push it from me. He held it to my mouth; but my lips were motionless; and,

tossing it off himself, he and the others went out of the cabin. No precaution was taken to keep me within; but the frenzy that had previouslyimpelled me to self-destruction had subsided, and I shuddered at what a few moments before appeared to me to be a source of relief. I sat for hours in the position in which they left me, gazing upon the dead body before me, but without the energy to rise and look at the features of him who had formed the object of my earliest devotions, the subject of all my fondest dreams of early youth and matured womanhood, now lying there lifeless. I had scarcely, during that period, consciousness of any object, but of a long, white figure extended on the table, with the moonlight reflected from it. The stupor left me—I cannot tell at what hour; and the first movement of living energy in my brain was a stinging impulse to rush forward and seize the body. I obeyed it, without a power to resist; and, tearing off the folds, laid bare the face, which was as placid as I had ever seen it, when, watching over him, I used to steal a look of him, during the hours of night, as he slept by my side, in the moonlight that stole through the cabin-window. In my agony, I clung to him—kissed the cold lips—called out 'George! George!'—threw the folds of the sheet over the face—again looked round me for some one to comfort me—felt the consciousness of my perilous position—and, as a kind of refuge from the despair that met me on every hand, withdrew again the folds, and acted over again the frenzied parts of a madness that mocked the miseries of the inmates of an asylum.

I must have exhausted myself by the excitement into which I was thrown; for, some time afterwards, I found myself lying upon the cot, and wakening again to a consciousness of all the ills that surrounded me. The light of the moon had given place to the dull beams of earliest dawn, which were only sufficient to shew me the extended figure on the table, and the confusion into which the furniture of the cabin was thrown. I heard the sounds of several footsteps in the cuddy. Sounds of voices struck my ear; and, rising up, I crawled forward to a situation where I could hear the communings from which my fate might be known.

'When the wind starts,' said Crawley—'it will be from the north—we should turn and make all speed for Rio, where we may dispose of the cargo, and then run the vessel to the West Indies. How do the men feel disposed, Kreutz—all braced and steady?'

'All but Wingate and Ryder, who are watched by the others, replied the German. These dogs would mutiny, ha! ha!—mein gut friend Buist is against their valking the plank; but they must either come in or go out. Teufel! no mutineers aboard the Griffin.'

'Right, Hans,' said Crawley. 'Get Murdoch to knock together the boards—we will bury him to-morrow; but the wife, man, what is to be done with her?'

'Put her ashore, to be sure,' responded Kreutz. 'Teath and hölle! there is not von difficulty there. The natives will be glad of her, and we want her not. If this calm vertam! it were gone, all would be gut and recht. That is the von thing only that troubles me.'

'If there is no wind,' said Crawley, 'to carry us out of the channel, there is none to bring any one to us.

At this moment, I thought they heard some movements, produced by a nervous trembling that came over me, and forced me to hold by a chair. Some whisperings followed. Kreutz went away, and Crawley entered. I had just time to retreat to the other side of the body of my husband. His manner was now that which was natural to him—harsh and repulsive. He ordered me peremptorily to the lower cabin. I had no power to resist, or even to speak; but I saw, in the order, the eternal separation of me and George; and, rushing forward, I withdrew the covering from his face, to take the last look—to imprint the last kiss on his cold lips. The act operated like the stirrings of conscience on the cowardly man of blood. His averted eye glanced for an instant on the body, and, seizing the coverlet, he wrapped up the countenance, and, taking me by the arm, hurried me down to the apartment set apart for passengers. This cabin was darker than the captain's, from some of the windows having been changed into dead lights; and I considered myself pent up in a dungeon. Hitherto my feelings had been, in a great measure, the result of existing moving circumstances; but now I was left to reflection, in so far as that act of the mind could be concerned in the attempt to picture the extremities of a fate that seemed as unavoidable as unparalleled. The diseased visions that had distracted me before any real evil occurred, were changed, from their dreamy, shadowy character, to realities. The lengthened trains of images that were required to satisfy the cravings of hypochondria, fled; and, in their place, there was one general, overwhelming fear, that seemed to engross all my thinking energies, and left no power to particularize the visions of danger that awaited me among the savages. There was only one presiding, prevailing idea that served as the rallying point of my terrors; and that was the dead body of George, with the white sheet in which he was swathed, and the peculiarly-formed oaken table on which he was placed, and at which we used to dine upon all the dainties to be found on board an Indiaman. It was the steadfastness of this idea that excluded the images of the fearful deep recesses—the Bacchanalian orgies of the savages—their anthropophagous rites, their midnight revels; but retained, as it were, hanging round it, the fear they had engendered, as a more complex feeling. After Crawley had left me, I had thrown myself down on a couch—an act of which I retained no consciousness; for afterwards, when daylight began to break in through the only window that was not closed up, I started to my feet, and did not know, for some time, that I was separated from the corpse; the vision of which had, during the interval, been so vivid, that it combined the conditions of figure and locality as perfectly as if it had been before me.

On the deck I now heard the sounds of several loud voices, and afterwards a scuffle, accompanied with the tramping of feet. There was then silence for a time; but my ears were stung, on a sudden, by a scream, succeeded by a plash, as if some one had been precipitated into the sea. A gurgling noise, as if the individual were drowning, followed; and the suspicion rushed into my mind, that they had made an example (to terrify the others) of one of the men who had rebelled against the authority of the mutineers. A silence, as deep as that of death, succeeded, which lasted about an hour, at the end of which period the sound of the saw and hammer were distinctly heard. I recollected the orders of Crawley, for Murdoch, the carpenter, to prepare George's coffin. The knocking continued for a considerable time, and produced such an effect upon me that the ideas, which had been, as it were, chained up by the freezing influence of the prevailing vision of the extended and rolled up body, broke away and careered through my mind with the velocity, unconnectedness, and intensity, that belong to certain states of excited mania. Images of the past and the future were mixed up in confusion; and every succeeding thought stung me with increased pain, till the idea of suicide again suggested itself, bringing in its train that which destroyed it—the terror of an avenging God, who will pass judgment on the takers of their own lives. I started, and sought forgiveness; and, for the first time under this agony, felt the soft action of the balm of a confided trust in Him who has mercy in endless stores for the good, but who poured his fury even upon the house of Israel, for the blood they shed upon

the land. But, must I confess it, the relief I felt from this high source was immediately again lost in the cold shiverings of instinctive fear, as I heard the knocking cease, knew the coffin was finished, and perceived, from the sounds in the cabin off the cuddy, that they were putting the body into the rudely constructed box, with a view of burying him in the deep sea.

Some indescribable emotion, at this time, forced me towards the cabin window, although the sight of the water was frightful to me. It was still and calm as ever, and the light was already sufficient to enable me to see far down in its green recesses. I could not take my eye from it. There were numerous creatures swimming about in it, some of which I had got described to me, but many of them I had never seen before. They seemed more hideous to me now than they had ever appeared when, on former occasions, I sat and watched their motions. The large bull-mouthed shark was there, rolling his huge body in apparent lethargy, and turning up his white belly in grim playfulness, as if in mockery of my misery. It had a charm about its truculent savageness that riveted my attention, while it shook my frame. It was connected in my mind with the fate of George's body, which, every moment, I expected to hear plash in the sea, in the midst of that shoal of creatures with strange forms and ravenous maws. An exacerbation of these sickly feelings made me lift my eyes; but it was only to fix them on the not less fearful island that lay before in the far distance, and now, in the fogs of the morning, through which the red sun struggled to send his beams, appeared a huge mass of inspissated vapour lying motionless on the surface of the sea. The very indistinctness of this hazy vision stimulated my fancy to its former morbid activity, and I saw again the mystic wooded ravines, sacred to the rites of cannibalism, of which I myself was doomed to be the object.

From this dream I was roused by the loud tread of men's feet over my head, as if the individuals were bearing a load that increased the heaviness of their steps. I was at no loss for the cause—they were carrying the coffin with the body in it to midship, where it was to be let down into its watery grave. In a short time afterwards, a gurgling of the waters met my ear, and, struggling to the foot of the companion ladder, I would have rushed upon deck if my strength would have permitted; but I fell upon the steps, and, lying there, heard a cry from some of them. I gathered, from the detached words I heard, that the bottom of the coffin had given way, from its insufficiency and the weight that had been put in it to make it sink; and that the body had gone down, while the chest swam on the surface. Several feet were now heard rapidly in motion, and the voice of Kreutz, who was running aft, fell on my ear.

'Teufil!' I heard him say, 'we shall have that grim corpse when the gallenblase—ha!—ha!—the gall bladder has burst, rising like von geist from the bottom of the deep sea, and staring at us. Hölle seize the stümper, Murdoch!"

These words, uttered by the German, were followed by some expression from Crawley, no part of which I could make out, except the oaths directed against the carpenter. The sounds died away; but I heard enough to satisfy me of the fact, that George's body had been consigned to the deep with only the shroud to defend it against the attacks of the ravenous creatures I had been contemplating. My mind was again forced, and with increased energy, into the train of gloomy meditations suggested by what I had heard; and so vivid were the visions that obeyed the excited powers of my imagination, that I forgot, as I lay brooding over them on the sofa to which I had staggered, the danger that next awaited myself. I could not now look at the sea, for I feared to meet the fact which would add probation to my imaginations—that the animals I had seen there had disappeared to crowd round the prey that had been given to them. Yet, the actual vision of that dear form, mutilated, torn, and devoured, could not, I am satisfied, have produced more insufferable agony, than accompanied and resulted from the diseased imaginings in which my fancy was engaged. The process that I pictured going on in the bottom of the sea, was coloured by hues so sickly, and attended by circumstances so distorted and grim, that all natural appearances, however harrowing, must have fallen short of the power they exercised over me. The positions in which I imagined him to be placed, were varied in a greater degree than ever I had seen the human body; the expressions of the countenance, though fixed by death, and not likely to be changed, became as Protean as the changing postures of the limbs; and the marine monsters that gamboled or fought around him for the prize, were invested with forms, colours, and attributes, of a kind not limited to what I had ever seen in the deep. The only idea that seemed to remain stationary, and not liable to the mutations into which all the others were every moment gliding, was the colour of the body, which was that of the green medium in which he lay. That sickly hue pervaded all parts; and even the dark or light colours of the inhabitants of the deep, partook, more or less, of the prevailing tint. It seemed to be the universal of all particulars, as time or space is the medium or condition of existence of all thought and matter; I felt the impossibility of any idea being true that did not partake of it; and, so strongly was the feeling of the ex-natural that accompanied it, that even now I cannot look at anything green without shuddering.

I cannot tell how long I was under the dominion of this train of thought. I was, in a manner, torn from it by the entrance of Kreutz with some food for me. He growled out a few words of mixed German and English, and left it on the table. It is needless to say that I could eat nothing. Even before these misfortunes overtook me, my appetite had left me; but now I loathed all edibles. After having been roused from the train of morbid imaginings in which I had been engaged, and which I clung to as if they imparted to me some unnatural satisfaction, I felt (and it is a curious fact) a recoiling disinclination to resume the grim subject, and even resorted to some imbecile and and despairing efforts to avoid it. It was not that I expected any relief from forbearing: every other subject that could be suggested by my position was equally fraught with tears and pains; but that having, as I now suppose, exhausted, for the time, the diseased workings, the view of an effort to call up again the thoughts that had been as it were supplied by disease, penetrated me with a sensation beyond the powers of endurance. For two or three hours afterwards, my attention was directed to the proceedings upon deck; but I could hear little beyond indistinct mutterings, and occasional sounds of the treading of feet over me. The calm, which had lasted for many days, still continued; and, until a wind sprung up, no effort could be made by the mutineers to retrace their progress through the channel, and proceed to their projected destination. At last the shades of night began to fall; exhausted nature claimed some relief from her sufferings; but the drowsiness that overcame me, was only a medium of a new series of imaginings still more grotesque and unnatural than those that had haunted me during the day.

When the morning dawned, I expected every moment the execution of the purpose I had heard declared by Crawley, to put me ashore on the island; and, during moments of more rational reflection, I could not account for my not having been disposed of in this way on the previous day. The terrors of that destiny were as strong upon me as ever; but, I must confess, that the view of real evil, almost unprecedented, as it seemed, in its extent and peculi-

arity, produced feelings entirely different from what resulted from the prior musings of my hypochondriac fancy. I would not be believed were I to say that the expected reality was not much more painful than the sickly vision. The miseries were of different kinds, proceeding from different causes, operating upon a mind in two different states. There was something in my own power. I was not justified in committing suicide as a mode of escape from an affliction that God might have seen meet to put upon me; but all my reasonings on this subject fled, before the view of this next calamity that awaited me. An extraordinary thought seized me, that I was not bound to hold life, when, through my own body and sensibilities, God's laws were to be overturned, and my sufferings were to be made a shame in the face of heaven. I secreted a knife in my bosom, and sat in silent expectation of the issue. I was again supplied with meat; but, on this occasion, Crawley brought it to me—and here began a new evil. He resumed, partially, his former dastardly sneaking manner; made love to me; offered me the honour of being still a captain's wife, and accompanied the offer with obliquely-hinted threats of a due consequence of my rejection of his suit. I spurned him; but I cannot dwell on the details of this proceeding. His suit was persisted in for two or three days, when, roused to madness, he told me that next day, if I consented not, I would be wedded to the natives of Madagascar. I traced the outline of the knife through the covering of my bosom, and defied him.

The next night was clear, and somewhat chill—indications of a cessation of the calm. The rudeness of Crawley had had the effect of keeping my mind from falling into the grasp of the demon of diseased fantasy; but, now my fate was fixed, I had no more to fear from him; and towards midnight, I fell again into the train of imaginings that had formerly haunted me. I had opened the cabin window for air—having felt a suffocating oppression of the chest during the day, proceeding from the extreme heat and the confined apartment. My eyes were again fixed in the direction of the island. I could see the dark shade of the land lying upon the gilded waters. All was still; my thoughts sought again the deep—the grave of George, the fancied condition of his body; and, as my ideas diverged to the calm scene around, it appeared to me as if all nature were dead, and that my own pulsations were the only living movements on earth. Lights now began to move along the shore, and then a fire blazed up into the firmament. The bodies of the savages flitted before it; I had seen the same appearances before; but I was now connected with these orgies in a more *real* manner than formerly. They ceased, and my mind again sought the recesses of the green deep, where all I loved on earth lay engulfed. My eye at times wandered over the surface of the waters; but I feared to look downwards into their bosom. My attention was suddenly fixed by an object in the sea. I put up my hands and rubbed my eyes. Was I deceived by a fancy? No! a dead body was there, not four yards distant from where I sat. It was that of my husband, rolled up in the same white sheet in which I had seen him extended on the oak table, and with his head raised somewhat above the surface, by the weights placed in the shroud having, as I afterwards thought, descended to the feet. A part of the sewing had been torn off the head, which was bare—the face was openly exposed to me, the moon shone upon it; I could perceive the very features, and even the lustreless eyes, that seemed fixed on the ship. There was not a breath of wind to ruffle the surface of the sea, which shone with a blue lustre in the light of the moon; and the body was as motionless as if it had been fixed on the earth. I have described, hitherto, what actually befell me, with the various states of my mind under extraordinary circumstances of pain and depression. My fancies belonged as much to nature as the facts which excited and nourished them, and must be believed by those who have studied the workings of the mind, even unconnected with the principles and facts of pathology. This was, however, no vision of the fancy, but a reality resulting from well-known physical laws. I sat, fixed immovably, at the window, and felt no more power of receding from it, than I formerly had of resigning my musings. My eyes were fixed upon that countenance which had been the *beau ideal* of love's idolatry—the fairest thing on earth, and the archtype of my dreams of heaven. I could not fly from it, horrible as it seemed in its blue glare and ghastly expression. I loved it while it shocked me; and all my powers of thinking were bound up in freezing terror. I felt the hair on my head move as the shrivelling skin became corrugated over my temples. That, and the occasional throbbings of my heart, were the only motions of any part of my being; but the body I gazed at seemed to be as immovable, and its eyes seemed not less steadfastly fixed on me than mine were on it.

How long I sat in this position I know not. There was no internal impulse that moved me to desist. I could, I thought, have looked for ever. Certain fearful objects possess a charm over the mind—and this was one of them; but I have sometimes thought that the power lay in producing the negative state of mental paralysis; for the instant my attention was called to a strange noise upon the deck, I was suddenly recalled to a natural sense of the fear it inspired. The sounds I heard were a mixture of exclamations and objections, pronounced in tones of fear and anger. I turned away my face from the dead body, with a strong feeling of repugnance to contemplate it again; and, groping my way to the companion-ladder, listened to what was going on above. Kreutz and Crawley were in communication.

'There is more than chance in that frightful appearance,' I heard Crawley say. 'And this calm, too—it will never end. God have mercy on us! Is there no man that will undertake to sink the body? I cannot stand the gaze of these white balls. See! the face is directed towards me; and yet I did not the deed, though I authorized it. Will no one save me from the glare of the grim avenger? I will give twenty gold pieces to the man who will remove it to the deep. Go forward, Kreutz, and try if you can prevail upon a bold heart to undertake the task!"

'Pho, man!' responded the German—'all von phantasy—anybody would have risen in the same way—Teufel! I heed it not von peterpfennig. But the men are alarmed, and begin to say that the captain has not got fair play. Hush! seize your degen. There is von commotion before the mast.'

I now heard a tumult in the fore part of the vessel, and began to suspect that the crew had been led to believe that George had died a natural death, and had been by some means prevailed upon to work the vessel, when the wind rose, in another direction, under the command of Crawley. The noise increased, and with it the fears of the cowardly villain whose conscience had been awakened by such strange means. Kreutz had left him to try to pacify the men; and the tones of his terror-struck voice continued to murmur around.

'There it still is,' he groaned, as his attention seemed to be divided between the sight he contemplated and the tumult, 'gazing steadfastly with these lack-lustre eyes for revenge. It is on me they are fixed—immovably fixed—as a victim which the spirit that floats over the body in that dead light of the moon demands, and will get. There is a God above in that blue firmament, who sees all things. I am lost. These men obey the call of a power that chooses that grim apparition as its instrument to call down destruction on my head. Ha! Kreutz has no influence here; the avengers are prepared.'

A step now came rapidly forward, and Kreutz' voice was again heard.

'If you will not try to quell them,' said he, 'all is lost. They swear the captain has been murdered, and that verdamt traitor Buist heads them on. Donner! shall Hans Kreutz die like one muzzled dog? On with degen in hand, and it may not be too late! We have friends among the caitiffs; strike down the first man; his blut will terrify them more than that staring geist, which is, after all, only von natural body, with no more spirit in it than the bones of my grandmutter. Frisch! frisch! auf, man, come, come, dash in and strike the first mutineer!'

The cowardly spirit of Crawley was acted upon by the stern German; for I heard him cry out—

'Hold there, men! what means this tumult—'sdeath?'

The rest of his words were drowned by the noise; but I heard the sounds of his and Kreutz's feet as they rushed forward. In an instant, the sound like that of a man falling prostrate on the deck, met my ear; and then there rose a yell that rung through every cranny of the ship. All seemed engaged in a desperate struggle. The words 'Revenge for our captain!' often sounded high above the other sounds. The clanging of many daggers followed; several bodies fell with a crash upon the deck, and loud groans, as if from persons in the agonies of death, were mixed with the cries of those who were struggling for victory. The tramping and confusion increased, till all distinct sound seemed lost in a general uproar. I got alarmed, and left my station at the foot of the companion-ladder; but I knew not whither to fly. I took again my seat at the window, as if I felt that there was an opening for me from which I might fly from the fearful scene. My agitation had banished from my mind for an instant the vision of the body; and I started again with increased fear as my eyes fell upon the corpse that had apparently been the cause of the uproar. It was still there, as motionless as before; yet, I thought, still nearer to me. I saw the features still more distinctly than ever, and found my mind again chained down by the charm it threw over me. The sounds for a time seemed to come upon my ear from a far, far distance, or like those heard in a dream; and like a dreamer, too, I struggled to get away from a vision that I at once loved and trembled at. The noises on deck seemed as those of the world, and the object before me the creation of the fancy that bound my soul, but left the sense of hearing open to living sounds. While in this state, I was suddenly roused by a rush of several men into the cabin; they held daggers in their hands, and their countenances were besmeared with blood. I looked at them, under the impression that they were my enemies, and that the cause of Crawley had triumphed; but I was soon undeceived—they told me that both he and Kreutz lay dead upon the deck, and that the victorious party were determined to complete the voyage and take the ship to Madras. The removal of one evil from a mind borne down by the weight of many, only leaves a greater power of susceptibility of the pain of what remains. The moment I heard of my own personal safety, I recurred again to the subject that affected me more deeply than even the fears of being consigned to the natives of the island—the dead body of George was still in the waters. The men understood and appreciated my sufferings. I again went to the cabin window, and, pointing to the corpse, implored Buist, who was present, to get it taken up and buried. He replied, that that had already been agreed upon, and orders were given to that effect. Several of the men volunteered of themselves to assist. A boat was put out, and I watched the solemn process. I saw them drag up the body from the sea, and would have flown to the deck to embrace once more the dearest object of my earthly affections; but I was restrained, from motives of humanity. I had reason to suppose that it had been dreadfully mutilated, and that was the reason why I was saved the pain of the sad sight. That same evening it was consigned again to the deep; and with it sunk the bodies of his murderers, Crawley and Kreutz.

Next day, a breeze sprang up, and bore us away from that fatal place. My eyes were fixed on it till I could see no longer any traces of that island which had caused me so many fears. In a short time, we arrived in India, where I remained about two months, and returned again with the Griffin to Britain.

"Now, sir," she continued, "all these things are in the course of man's doings in this strange world. It is also very natural that I should think of him. But a more dreadful effect has followed. I shudder when I think of it."

She stopped and looked at me, as if she were afraid to touch upon the subject of the visual illusion. I told her that I understood the cause of her fears; and having questioned her, I satisfied myself from her answers that I had at last discovered a case of true *monomania*, in which the patient conceived that she saw, with the same distinctness as when she looked from the cabin window of the Griffin, the corpse of her husband swimming in the sea, with the head and chest above the waters, surrounded with the same blue moonlight, and every minute circumstance attending the real presence.

I meditated a cure; but I frankly confess that it was my anxious wish to witness her under the influence of the fit; and, with that view, I purposed waiting upon her repeatedly in the evenings, when, under the shaded light of the candle, it generally came over her. I was baffled in this for several weeks, chiefly, I presume, from the circumstance of my presence operating as an engagement of her mind; but, one evening when I was sitting with her mother in another room, the sister came suddenly, and beckoned me into that occupied by my patient. The door was opened quietly and, on looking in, I saw, for the first time, a vision-struck victim of this extraordinary disease. She sat, as if under a spell, her arms extended, her eyes fixed on the imaginary object, and every sense bound up in that which contemplated the spectre vision. The fit ended with a loud scream; she fell back in her chair, crying wildly—"George!—George!" and lay, for a minute or two, apparently insensible.

I continued my study of this extraordinary case for a considerable period; and, while I administered to her relief, I got her to explain to me some things which may be of use to our profession. I need not say that I was able to penetrate the dark secret of the seat of either the pathology or the metaphysique of the disease. That it was connected with the irritability of her nerves, and the affection of the eyes, there can be little doubt; because, as she mended in health, the fits diminished in number, and latterly went off. I may, however, state that, from all I could learn from her, the fit was something of the nature of a dream—all the objects around her, at the time, being as much unnoticed as if they existed not; and although she was possessed with an absolute conviction that the body of her husband was actually at the time present, it was precisely that kind of conviction that we feel in a vivid dream

WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE RECLUSE.

The situations of farm-houses, or steadings, as we call them in Scotland, are very rarely selected so much for their beauty, with reference to the surrounding scenery, as for conveniency; and hence it is that we find but few of them in positions which a view-hunter would term strikingly felicitous. When they are so, we rather presume the circumstance arises from its happening that eligibility and choice have agreed in determining the point. Yet, seriously, though the generality of farm-steadings have little to boast of as regards situation, there are many pleasing exceptions. Nay, there are some to be found occupying the most choice positions—surrounded with or overlooking all that is beautiful in nature. One of these, most certainly, is the farm-house of West Mains, in the Parish of Longorton, Lanarkshire. It stands on the summit of a gentle, isolated eminence that rises in the very centre of a deep and romantic valley, formed of steep green hills, thickly wooded towards the bottom, but rising in naked verdancy from about the centre upwards. The view from the house is thus, indeed, limited; but this limitation is amply compensated by its singular beauty.

About fifty years ago, this beautifully-situated farm-house was occupied by one Robert Adair, who rented also the entire valley in which it is situated. Adair's family, at this time, consisted of himself, his wife, a son, and two daughters, Martha and Rosina, or Rosy, as she was familiarly called. The former was, at the period of our story, in her twentieth year, the latter in her eighteenth. Martha was a good-looking and good-tempered girl; but, in both respects, and in several others, she was much surpassed by her younger sister, Rosy, as we, too, prefer to call her. The latter, with personal attractions of no common order, was one of the liveliest and most cheerful creatures imaginable. Nothing could damp her buoyant spirit; nothing, be it what it might, could make her sad for longer than ten minutes together. From morning to night she continued pouring out, in a voice of the richest and most touching melody, the overflowings of a light and innocent heart. And scarcely less melodious was the joyous and gleeful laugh, in which she ever and anon gave way to the promptings of a lively and playful imagination. Let it not, however, be thought that all this apparent levity of manner was the result of an unthinking or uncalculating mind, or that it was in her case, as it frequently is in others, associated with qualities which exclude the finer and better feelings of female nature. It was by no means so. With all her gaiety and sportiveness, she had a heart filled with all the tenderest sensibilities of woman. Her attachments were warm and ardent. In character, simple and sincere, Rosy could have died for those she loved; and so finely strung were the sympathies of her nature, that they were wrought on at will by either mirth or pathos, and with each were found equally to accord.

Rosy's father, Mr Adair, although holding a considerable extent of land, and paying a very handsome rental, was yet by no means in affluent circumstances. Both his name and his credit in the country were on a fair footing, and he was not encumbered with more debt than he could very easily pay. But this was all; there was no surplus—nothing to spare; and the less, that he had been liberal in his expenditure on the education of his daughters. On this he had grudged no cost; they had both passed several winters in Glasgow, and had there possessed themselves of some of the more elegant accomplishments in female education.

In character, Robert Adair was something of an original. In speech, blunt, plain, and humorous; but in disposition, kind, sincere, and generous. He was, in short, in all respects an excellent and worthy man. On the score of education, he had not much to boast of; but this deficiency was, in part at any rate, compensated by great natural shrewdness and vigour of mind.

Such, then, were the inmates of the farm-house of West Mains, at the period to which our story refers, and which is somewhere about the year 1788.

It was at the close of a day of incessant rain, in the month of September of that year, or it may, perhaps, have been of the year following, that a young man, of somewhere about five-and-twenty years of age, respectably dressed, with a stick in his hand, and a small leathern bundle under his arm, presented himself at the door of Robert Adair's house, and knocked for admittance. The door was opened by Robert himself; and when it was so, the person whom we have described stood before him. He was drenched with wet. It was streaming from his hat, and had soaked him all over to the skin. He was thus, altogether, in most uncomfortable plight; for, besides being wet, the night was intensely cold.

"Can you, my good friend," said the stranger, in a tone and manner that bespoke a person of education at least, if it might not be ventured to call him a gentleman—"Can you give me quarters for a night?" he said, on being confronted by Mr Adair. "I am an entire stranger in this part of the country, and do not know of any inn at hand, otherwise I would not have troubled you. I will, very readily, pay for my accommodation."

"A nicht's quarters, frien," replied Adair. "Oh, surely, ye'll get that, an' welcome. Walk in. Save us, man, but ye hae gotten a soakin! Ye're like a half-drooned rat. But stap in, stap in. There's a guid fire there in the kitchen; and I'm sure ye're no out the need o' a blink o't."

In a minute after, the stranger was comfortably seated before a roaring fire. But his host's hospitality did not end with this kindness: he insisted on his guest shifting himself; and, to enable him to do so, brought him a whole armfull of his own clothes; shirt, coat, waistcoat, trousers, and stockings. Nor with this kindness did his benevolence yet terminate; he invited the stranger to accept of some refreshment; an invitation which he followed up by desiring his daughter Rosy to cover a small table close by the fire, and to place thereon such edibles as she had at hand. Delighting as much as her father in acts of kindness, Rosy hastened to obey an order so agreeable to her. In a trice, she had the table covered with various good things, conspicuous amongst which was a jolly round of salt beef. In compliance with the request of his host, the stranger

drew into the table thus kindly prepared for him; but, to the great disappointment of his entertainer, ate very sparingly.

"Dear help me, man!—eat, eat, canna ye!" exclaimed Adair, every now and then, as he marked the listless manner in which the stranger pecked at the food on his plate. "Eat, man, canna ye!" he said, getting absolutely angry at his guest's want of appetite, which he construed into diffidence. "Lord, man, take a richt whang on your plate at once, and dinna be nibblin at it that way, like a mouse at a Du'lap cheese." Saying this, he seized a knife and fork, cut a slice from the cold round, an inch in thickness, and at least six in diameter, and threw it on the stranger's plate with much about the same grace which he exhibited in tossing a truss of hay with a pitchfork. "There, man, tak half-a-dizzen o' cuts like that, and then ye may say ye hae made a bit supper o't."

Robert Adair was, in truth, but a rough table attendant, but he was a kind one, and in all he said and did meant well, however uncouthly it might be expressed.

Of this the stranger seemed perfectly aware; and, although he could not eat, he appeared fully to appreciate the sincerity of his host's invitations to him to do so.

After persevering, therefore, a little longer, as if to please his entertainer, he at length laid down his knife and fork, and declared that he was now satisfied, and could take no more. On his making this decided movement—

"My faith," said his hospitable landlord, "an' ye be na waur to water than to corn, I think I could board ye, an' no be a loser, for a very sma' matter. Rosy, bring butt the bottle."

Obedient to the command, Rosy tripped out of the kitchen, and in an instant returned with the desiderated commodity—a dumpy, bluff, opaque bottle, of about a gallon contents—which she placed on the table. Adair seized it by its long neck, and, filling up a brimming bumper, tossed it off to the health of his guest. This done, he filled up another topping glass, and presented it to the stranger, with a strong recommendation on the score of excellence. "Ra–a–l guid stuff, sir," he said, "tak my word for't. Juist a cordial. Noo, dinna trifle wi' your drink as ye did wi' your meat, or I'll no ken what to think o' ye at a'."

The stranger, with renewed acknowledgments for the kindness shewn him, took the proffered beverage; but, instead of taking it off as his worthy host had expected, he merely put it to his lips, and replaced it on the table.

"Weel, that cowes the gowan!" said Adair. "Ye'll neither hap nor wyn—neither dance nor haud the cannle. Try't again, man, try't again. Steek your een hard, gie ae gulp, an' ower wi't."

The worthy man, however, pressed in vain. The stranger would not drink; but once more acknowledged the kindness and well-meant hospitality of his entertainer.

During all this time, the stranger had neither said nor done any single thing which was capable of imparting the slightest idea of who or what he was—where he was from, or whence he was going. Indeed, he hardly spoke at all; and the little he did speak, was almost all confined to brief expressions of thanks for the kindness shewn him. When seen as he was now, under more favourable circumstances than those in which he had first presented himself, shivering with cold and drenched with wet, he exhibited a handsome exterior. His countenance was full of expression and intelligence, but was overspread with an apparently deep-seated and settled melancholy. He appeared, in short, to be a person who was suffering severely either in body or mind; but his affliction exhibited all the symptoms of being of the latter rather than the former. Yet was not the profound gravity of his manner of an unpleasing or repulsive character; it partook of a gentleness and benevolence that rendered it rather graceful than otherwise. The tones of his voice, too, corresponded with these qualities; they were mild and impressive, and singularly agreeable. Altogether, the stranger appeared a mysterious sort of person; and greatly did it puzzle Mr Adair and all his household to conjecture who or what he could possibly be; a task to which they set themselves after he had retired to bed, which he did—pleading fatigue as an excuse—at an early hour. The first ostensible circumstance connected with their guest of the night, which the family divan, with the father of it at their head, took into consideration when discussing the knotty points of the stranger's character and calling, was his apparel. But of this they could make nothing. His habiliments were in no ways remarkable for anything; they being neither good, bad, nor indifferent, but of that indefinite description called respectable. So far as these were concerned, therefore, he might be either a peer of the realm or an English bagman.

Finding they could make nothing of the clothes, the family cabinet council next proceeded to the looks and manners of the stranger; and, with regard to these, all agreed that they seemed to bespeak the gentleman; and on this conclusion from the premises, none insisted more stoutly than Rosy, who, let us observe, although she thought nobody saw her, had taken several stolen glances at the subject of discussion while he was seated at the kitchen fire; and at each glance, let us further observe, more and more approved of his finely arched eyebrows, his well formed mouth, dark expressive eyes, and rich black locks that clustered around his white and open forehead. But all this is a secret, good reader, and should not have been told.

So far, then, had the united opinions of the family determined regarding their guest. But what should have brought him the way of West Mains, such an out-of-the-way place, seeing that he had neither gun, dog, nor fishing-rod, and could not, therefore, have been in pursuit of sport? It was odd, unaccountable. Where could he be from? Where could he be going to? These were questions more easily put than answered; and by all were they put, but by none were they replied to. At length, Mr Adair took speech in hand himself on the subject.

"I kenna, nor, indeed, neither do I muckle care, wha the lad is; but he seems to me to be a ceevil, discreet young man; and I rather like him a'thegither, although he's a dooms bad haun at baith cap and trencher. A', however, that we hae to do wi' him, is to treat him ceevily while he's under our roof. He's gotten a guid bed to lie in, and in the mornin we'll gie him a guid breakfast to tak the road wi', and there'll be an end o't. It's no likely we'll ever hear or see mair o' him." Having said this, Robert broke up the conclave; gave the long-drawn sonorous yawn that his family knew to be the signal of preparation for bed. In the next moment, Adair's left hand was busily employed in undoing the knee buttons of his small clothes. Another powerful yawn, and he proceeded to perform the same operation on his right leg. In two minutes after, he was snugly buried beneath the blankets; his "honest, sonsy, bawsint face," and red Kilmarnock night-cap, being all that was left visible of him; and, in five minutes more, a magnificent snore intimated to all whom it might concern, that worthy Robin Adair was fairly in the land of Nod, and oblivious of all earthly concerns.

On the following morning, Mr Adair and his guest met at breakfast, when that liking for each other which had begun to manifest itself on the preceding night—although neither, perhaps, could say precisely whence it arose—gradually waxed into a somewhat stronger feeling. Adair was pleased with the gentle and unaffected manners of his guest, while the latter was equally pleased with the sincerity

of character and generosity of heart of his entertainer. It appeared, however, as if their acquaintance was to be but of short duration, and as if they were now soon to part, in all probability, for ever. Circumstances seemed to point to this result; yet it was by no means the one that followed—an odd incident at once threw out all such calculation.

When breakfast was concluded, and the party who had sat around the table—Adair, his family, and the stranger—had risen to their feet, the latter, smiling through his natural gravity, asked his host if he would be so good as give him a private interview with him. To this Mr Adair, although not a little surprised at the request, consented, and led the way into a small back-parlour that opened from the room in which they had breakfasted.

"Mr Adair," said the stranger, on their entering this apartment, and having previously secured the door, "I am greatly indebted to you for the kindness and hospitality you have shewn me."

"No the least, sir—no the least," replied the farmer, with a degree of respect in his manner with which his guest's air and bearing had unconsciously inspired him, he did not know how or wherefore—"No the least. I am aye glad to shew civility to them that seek the shelter o' my rufe; it's just a pleasure to me. Ye're not only heartily welcome, sir, to a' ye hae gotten, but to a week o't, an' ye like. I dinna think that I wad be the first to weary o't."

"Have you any objection to try?" said the stranger, with a gentle smile.

"None whatever," replied the hospitable yeoman.

"Well, Mr Adair," said the stranger, with more gravity of manner, "to convert jest into earnest, I have a proposal to make to you. I have been for some time looking out for such a quiet retirement as this is, and a family as respectable and agreeable as yours seems to me to be. Now, having found both of these things to my mind here, I will, if you have no objection, become a boarder with you, Mr Adair, paying you a hundred guineas a-year; and here," he said, drawing out a well-filled purse, and emptying its contents on the table—"here are fifty guineas in advance." And he told off from the heap that lay on the table the sum he named, and thrust it towards his astonished host. "And let me add," went on the mysterious stranger, "that, if you agree to my proposal, and continue to put up as well together as I expect we shall, I will not limit my payment to the sum I have mentioned. What say you to this, Mr Adair?"

To *this* Mr Adair could say nothing for some time. Not a word. He was lost in perplexity and amazement—a state of mental difficulty and embarrassment, which he made manifest by scratching his head, and looking, with a bewildered sort of smile, alternately at the gold and its late owner—first at the one, then at the other. At length—

"Well," he said, still scratching his head, "this is a queer sort o' business, an' a turn o' matters I didna look for ava; but I hae seen waur things come o' better beginnins. To tell ye a truth, sir," continued the perplexed yeoman, "I'm no oot o' the need o' the siller. But, if ye'll just stop a minute, if ye please, till I speak to the guidwife on the subject."

And, with this, Adair hurried out of the room; and, having done this, he hurried his wife into another, and told her of what had just taken place, concluding with a—"An', noo, guidwife, what do ye think we should do?"

"Tak the siller, to be sure," replied the latter. "He seems to me to be a decent, canny lad; and, at ony rate, we canna be far wrang wi' ae six months o' him, ony way, seein that he's payin the siller afore haun. That's the grand point, Rab."

'Feth, it's that, guidwife—nae doot o't," replied her husband. "Juist the pint o' pints. But whar'll ye put the lad?"

"Ou, tak ye nae fash about that, guidman. I'll manage that. Isna there the wee room up the stair, wi' a bed in't that micht sair the king himself—sheets as white as the driven snaw, and guid stripped druggit curtains just oot the mangle?"

"Weel, weel, guidwife, ony way ye like as to thae matters," replied Adair; "and I'll awa, in the meantime, and get haud o' the siller. There's gowd yonner for the liftin. Deil o' the like o't ever I saw." Saying this, he flung out of the apartment, and in the next minute was again in the presence of the mysterious stranger.

On his entering—"Well, Mr Adair," said the latter, "what does your good lady say to my becoming a boarder with her?"

"Feth, sir, she's very willin, and says ye may depend on her and her dochter doin everything in their power to make ye comfortable."

"Of that I have no doubt," said the stranger; "and now, then, that this matter is so far settled, take up your money, Mr Adair, and reckon on punctual payments for the future."

"No misdoutin that, sir, at a'," said the latter, picking up the guineas, one after another, and chucking them into a small leathern purse which he had brought for the purpose. "No misdoutin' at a' sir," he said. "I tak this to be guid earnest o' that."

The stranger, then, whoever he was, was now fairly domiciled in the house of Mr Adair. The name he gave himself was Mowbray; and by this name he was henceforth known.

For two years succeeding the period of which we have just been speaking, did Mr Mowbray continue an inmate of West Mains, without any single circumstance occurring to throw the smallest light on his history. At the end of this period, as little was known regarding him as on the day of his first arrival. On this subject he never communicated anything himself; and, as he was always punctual in his payments, and most exemplary in his general conduct, those with whom he resided did not feel themselves called upon, nor would it have been decorous, to make any further inquiry on the subject. Indeed, although they had desired to do so, there was no way open to them by which to obtain such information.

During the period alluded to, Mr Mowbray spent the greater part of his time in reading; having, since his settlement at West Mains, opened a communication with a bookseller in the neighbouring country town of —— ; and in walking about the country, visiting the more remarkable scenery, and other interesting objects in the neighbourhood.

During all this time, too, his habits were extremely retired; shunning, as much as he possibly could, all intercourse with those whom he accidentally met; and, even at home, mingling but little with the family with which he resided. Privacy and quietness, in short, seemed to be the great objects of his desire; and the members of Mr Adair's household, becoming aware of this, not only never needlessly intruded themselves on him, but studiously avoided involving him in conversation, which they observed was always annoying to him. He was thus allowed to go abroad and to return, and even to pass, when accidentally met by any members of the family, without any notice being taken of him, further, perhaps, than a slight nod of civility, which he usually returned without uttering a syllable.

From all this—his retired habits, deep-seated melancholy, and immoveable taciturnity—it was evident to Mr Adair and his family that their boarder was labouring under some grievous depression of mind; and in this opin-

ion they were confirmed by various expressions of grief, not unaccompanied by others of contrition, which they had frequently overheard, accidentally, as they passed the door of his apartment on occasions—and these were frequent—when Mr Mowbray seemed more than usually depressed by the sorrow to which he was a prey.

With all this reserve and seclusion, however, there was nothing repulsive in Mr Mowbray's manners or habits. He was grave without being morose, taciturn without being churlish, and sought quietness and retirement himself, without any expression of impatience with, or sign of peevishness at the stir and bustle around him.

As a matter of course, the history and character of Mr Mowbray excited, at least for a time, much speculation in the neighbourhood; and these speculations, as a matter of course, also, as we may venture to say, were not in general of the most charitable description. One of these held forth that he was a retired highwayman, who had sought a quiet corner in which to enjoy the fruits of his industry, and to avoid the impertinences of the law; another held that he was a murderer, who had fled from justice; another, that he was a bankrupt, who had swindled his creditors; a fourth, that he was a forger, who had done business in that way to a vast extent.

As to the nature of the crime which Mr Mowbray had committed, it will be seen that there were various opinions; but that he had committed some enormous crime of some sort or other, was a universal opinion—in this general sentiment all agreed.

Amongst other mysteries, was that involved in the query—where did he get his money? Where did it come from? He did not, indeed, seem to have the command of very extensive resources; but always to have enough to pay punctually and promptly everything he desired, and to settle all pecuniary claims upon him.

His remittances, it was also ascertained, came to him, from whatever quarter it might be, regularly twice a-year, per the English mail, which passed within a mile and a half of West Mains. The exact amount of these remittances, which were always in gold, and put up in a small, neat, tight parcel, was never exactly known; but was supposed, on pretty good grounds, to be, each, somewhere about a hundred and fifty guineas, one of which went to Mr Adair; for Mr Moubray had, of his own accord, added fifty guineas per annum to the hundred which he had first promised. The other hundred and fifty was disposed of in various ways, or left to accumulate with their owner. Such, then, was the amount of information acquired regarding Mr Mowbray's pecuniary resources; and more, on this point, or any other regarding him, could not, by any means, be arrived at.

By the end of the period, however, which we have above named—namely, two years—public opinion had, we must observe, undergone a considerable modification in Mr Mowbray's favour. He had been gradually acquitted of his various crimes; and the worst that was now believed of him was, that he was a gentleman whom troubles, of some kind or other, had driven from the world.

This favourable change in public opinion regarding him was, in a great measure, if not, indeed, wholly owing to the regularity of his conduct, the gentleness of his manners, his generosity—for he was a liberal contributor to the relief of the necessitous poor in his vicinity—and to the rigid punctuality he observed in all his pecuniary transactions.

In the family in which he resided, where there were, of course, better opportunities for judging of his character, and estimating his good qualities, he came to be much beloved. Adair, as he often said himself, would "gae through fire and water to serve him;" for a more honourable, or "discreet" young gentleman, as he also frequently said, "didna breathe the breath o' existence."

On every other member of the family, the impression he made was equally favourable; and, on one of them, in particular, we might speak of it in yet stronger language. But of this anon.

The general conviction into which the family with which Mr Mowbray resided fell, regarding the personal history of that person, was, that he was a gentleman who possessed a moderate annuity from some fixed sum, and that some disgust with the world had driven him into his present retirement; and in this conviction they had now been so long and so completely settled, that they firmly believed in its truth, and never after dreamed of again agitating the question, even in the most distant manner.

Thus, then, stood matters at West Mains at the end of two years from the period at which our story opens. Hitherto, however, we have only exhibited what was passing above board. We will now give the reader a peep of certain little matters that were going on behind the scenes.

A short while previous to the time of which we now speak, Rosy's sister, Martha, had gone to Edinburgh to spend the winter with a near relative of her father; partly as a friendly visit, and partly for the purpose of perfecting herself in certain branches of female education. This separation was a painful one to the two sisters, for they were much attached to each other; but they determined to compensate it by maintaining a close and regular correspondence; and huge was the budget that each soon accumulated of the other's epistolary performances. Out of these budgets we will select a couple, which will give the reader a hint of some things of which, we daresay, he little dreamed. The first is from Martha to her sister, and is dated from Edinburgh.

"My Dear Rosy," (runs this document,) "I received your kind letter by Mr Meiklewham, likewise the little jar of butter for Aunt, who says it is delicious, and that she would know it to be West Mains butter wherever she should have met with it.

"I am delighted to hear that you are all well, and that Mr Mowbray has got better of his slight indisposition. By the by, Rosy, I have observed that you are particularly guarded in all your communications about Mr M. When you speak of him you don't do so with your usual sprightliness of manner. Ah! Rosy, Rosy, I doubt—I doubt—I have long doubted, or rather, I have been long convinced—of *what*, say you blushing? *N'importe*—nothing at all. Do you believe me, Rosy?—No, you don't. Does Mr M. fix his fine expressive eyes on you as often and as intensely as he used to do? Eh, Rosy!—Now, there's something you can't deny.

"To be serious, Rosy, my dear sister, I have long been satisfied that you are loved by Mr Mowbray—deeply, sincerely, ardently loved. And, more, my dear Rosy, I am equally satisfied that Mr Mowbray is loved by *you*. I am certain of it. I have marked many symptoms of it, although I have never mentioned it to you before; and I do it now in order to induce you to unburden yourself of such feelings, as it may relieve you to discover to a sister who loves you tenderly and sincerely," &c. &c.

Our next quotation is from Martha's budget; and we shall select the letter she received in reply to the one above given. It is dated West Mains, and proceeds thus:—

"My Dear Martha,—It is not in my nature to play a double part. I freely confess, my dear Martha, in reply to your lecture on a certain subject, that Mr Mowbray is not indifferent to me. I have long, I avow it, admired the many good qualities which we have all acknowledged him to possess—his gentlemanly bearing; his accomplishments; the

elegance of his manners, and the noble generosity of his nature. These I have indeed, Martha, long admired. But what reason have you for supposing that your sister, with nothing to recommend her but some very homely advantage of person, can have made any impression on the heart of such a man as Mr Mowbray? Here, Martha, you are decidedly at fault, and have jumped to a conclusion which you have rather wished than believed. But, enough of this foolish matter."—And here the fair writer leaps off to another subject, which, as it has no reference to our story, nor any particular interest of its own, we beg to leave in the oblivion in which it reposes. And having quoted enough of the sisters' corespondence for our purpose, we will here, again, throw our narrative into its more direct and legitimate channel.

By the letters above given, we have shewn pretty plainly that, on the part of the one sister, a secret attachment to the unknown lodger was in rapid progress, if it had not indeed already attained a height fatal to the peace of mind of her by whom it was entertained; and that, on the part of the other, a strong suspicion existed, not only that such love had been generated, but that this love was mutual. And was it so? It was. Mr Mowbray had not, indeed, made any very palpable advances, nor displayed any symptoms of the state of his feelings, which any one but such a close and shrewd observer as Martha could have detected. To no other eyes did this secret stand revealed. But there was now, in his general manner towards Rosy, much that such an observer could not fail to be struck with, nor to attribute to its real and proper cause. Nor was this change confined to his intercourse with Rosy Adair—to the slight confusion that appeared in his countenance whenever they accidentally met each other, unseen of any one besides, and to the evident pleasure which he took in her society—to the circumstance of his seeking that pleasure as often as he could without making it subject of remark. No, the change that had now come over Mr Mowbray, was not confined to what such incidents as these may be presumed to indicate; his spirit also, the whole tenor of his thoughts, the whole constitution of his mind, seemed equally under the influence of his new-born passion. His manner became more cheerful; his eye became lighted up with an unwonted fire; and he no longer indulged in the seclusion which he had so sedulously sought when he first came to West Mains. Mr Mowbray was now, in fact, a changed man, and changed for the better. He was now no longer the weeping, melancholy recluse, but a character evidently much more suitable to his natural temper and dispositions—a gay and cheerful man of the world. It was, indeed, a marvellous change; but so it was.

This, however—referring to the attachment which had thus grown up between Rosy Adair and Mr Mowbray—was a state of matters which could not long remain in the position in which we have represented them; some result or conclusion was inevitable—and it arrived. Mr Mowbray gradually became more and more open in his communications with Miss Adair; gradually disclosed the state of his feelings with regard to her, and finally avowed his love. Miss Adair heard the delightful confession with an emotion she could not conceal; and, ingenuous in everything, in all she said and did, avowed that she loved in return.

"Then, my Rosina, my beloved Rosina," exclaimed Mr Mowbray, in a wild transport of joy—and throwing himself, in the excitation of the moment, at the feet of her whom he addressed—"allow me to mention this matter to your father, and to seek his consent to your making me the happiest of living men."

The liberty he thus sought with such grace and earnestness, was blushingly granted; not indeed, in express words, but with a silence equally intelligible, and more eloquent than words.

In five minutes after, Mr Mowbray was closeted, and in earnest conversation with Mr Adair. He had already announced his attachment to his daughter, and had sought his consent to their union. Mr Adair had yet made no reply. The request was one of too serious a nature to be hastily or unreflectingly acquiesced in. At length—

"Weel, Mr Mowbray," said Mr Adair, "I'll tell ye what it is: although I certainly haena a' the knowledge o' ye—that is, regarding yoursel and your affairs—that I maybe hae a richt to insist on haein before giein ye the haun o' my dochter—and this for a' the time that ye hae been under my roof—yet, as in that time—noo, I think, something owre twa year gane by—yer conduct has aye been that o' a gentleman, in a' respects—sober, discreet, and reglar; most exemplary, I maun say;—and, as I am satisfied that ye hae the means o' supportin a wife, in a decent way, no to say that there may be muckle owre either, I really think I can hae nae reasonable objections to gie ye Rosy after a'."

During this speech of the worthy yeoman's, there was on Mr Mowbray's countenance a smile of peculiar meaning; evidently one under which lay something amusing, mingled with the expression of satisfaction which Mr Adair's sanction to his marriage with Rosina had elicited.

Delighted with the success of his mission, Mr Mowbray now flew to the apartment in which he had left Miss Adair, and, enfolding her in his arms, in a transport of joy, informed her that he had obtained her father's consent to their union, and concluded by asking her to name the day which should make her his for ever. This, however, being rather too summary a proceeding, Rosina declined; and Mr Mowbray was obliged to be content with a promise of the matter being taken into consideration on an early day.

Leaving the lovers in discussion on these very agreeable points, and others connected therewith, we will follow Mr Adair on the errand on which he went, after Mr Mowbray had left him. This was to communicate to his wife the unexpected and important proposal which had just been made to him, and to which he had just acceded.

"Weel, guidwife, here's a queer business," said Mr Adair, on joining his thrifty helpmate, who was busy at the moment in scouring a set of milk dishes. "What do ye think? Mr Mowbray has just noo asked my consent to his marrying Rosy. Now, isna that a queer affair! My feth, but they maun hae managed matters unco cannily and cunningly; for deil a bit o' me ever could see the least inklin o' anything past ordinar between them."

"You see onything o' that kind!" replied Mrs Adair, with an expression of the greatest contempt for her husband's penetration in *affaires de cœur*. "You see't, Robin! No—I dare say no. Although they were sittin under your very nose, wi' their arms aboot ither's necks, I dinna believe ye wad see that there was onything in't. But, though ye didna see't, Robin, I saw't—and plainly enough, too—although I said naething about it. I saw, mony a day sin', that Mr Mowbray had a notion o' Rosy; and, if truth be tell't, I saw as weel that she had a notion o' him, and hae lang expected that it wad come to this."

"Weel, weel, guidwife, ye hae a glegger ee for thae things than I hae," replied Mr Adair. "But here's the end o' the matter noo."

"And hae ye gien your consent, Robin?"

"'Deed hae I; for I think he's an honest, decent lad; and, no to say he's rich maybe, fair aneuch aff, I think, as to worldly matters."

"As to that, I daresay, there's naething far amiss," replied Mrs Adair, "nor as regards his character either, maybe; but I'm no sure. I dinna ken, Robert, considerin a' things, if ye haena been a wee owre rash in giein your consent to this business. It's a serious affair. And, after a', we ken but little about the lad; although, I canna but say he

seems to be a decent, honourable chiel, and I houp'll mak Rosy happy." Here the good woman raised the corner of her apron to her eyes, and gave way, for a second or two, to those maternal feelings which the occasion was so well calculated to excite.

"Tuts, woman; what's the use o' that?" said Mr Adair, with a sort of good-natured impatience. "The thing's a' richt aneuch, and sae'll be seen in the end, nae doot."

"God grant it!" replied his wife, with solemn earnestness; and here the conversation dropped for the time.

We now revert to the proceedings of Mr Mowbray at this eventful crisis of his life; but in these we find only one circumstance occurring between the day on which he solicited, and that on which he obtained the hand of Rosy Adair. This circumstance, however, was one of rather curious import. It was a letter which Mr Mowbray addressed to a friend, and ran thus:—

"Dear Naresby,—The appearance of this well-known hand—well known to you, my friend—will, I daresay, startle you not a little. My letter will seem to you as a communication from the dead; for it is now upwards of two long years since you either heard from me or of me. On this subject I have much to say to you, and on some others besides, but defer it until I shall have the pleasure of seeing you at Wansted—a pleasure which I hope to have in about three weeks hence—when we shall talk over old affairs, and, mayhap, some new ones. Would you believe me, Naresby, if I was to say, that the sea had ceased to ebb and flow, that the hills had become valleys, and the valleys had risen into hills; that the moon had become constant, and that the sun had forgotten to sink in the west when his daily course was run? Would you believe any or all of these things, if I were to assert them to be true? No, you wouldn't. Yet will you as readily believe them, I daresay, as that I am to be—how can I come out with the word!—to be—to be married, Naresby! Married! Yes, married. I am to be married—I repeat it slowly and solemnly—and to one of the sweetest and fairest creatures that ever the sun of heaven shone upon. 'Oh! of course,' say you. But it's true, Naresby; and, ere another month has passed away, you will yourself confess it; for ere that period has come and gone, you will have seen her with your own eyes.

"So much then for resolution, for the weakness of human nature. I thought—nay, I swore, Naresby, as you know—that I would, that I could never love again. I thought that the treachery, the heartlessness of one, one smiling deceiver, had seared my heart, and rendered it callous to all the charms and blandishments of her sex. But I have been again deceived.

"I have not, however, this time, chosen the object of my affections from the class to which——I cannot pronounce her name—that fatal name—belonged; but from one which, however inferior in point of adventitious acquirement, far surpasses it—of this experience has convinced me—in all the better qualities of the heart.

"The woman to whom I am to be married—my Rosina Adair!—is the daughter of a humble yeoman, and has thus neither birth nor fortune to boast of. But what in a wife are birth or fortune to me? Nothing, verily nothing, when their place is supplied—as in the case of my betrothed—by a heart that knows no guile; by a temper cheerful and complying; and by personal charms that would add lustre to a crown. Birth, Naresby, I do not value; and fortune I do not want.

"Well, then, Naresby, my period of seclusion is now about over, and I return again to the world. Who would have said this two years ago? If any one had, I would have told them they spoke untruly—that I had abjured the world, and all its joys, for ever; and that, henceforth, William Mowbray would not be as other men. But so it is. I state the fact, and leave others to account for and moralize on it."

Such, then, was the letter which Mr Mowbray wrote to his friend, Naresby, during the interval to which we formerly alluded. Several other letters he also wrote and despatched about the same time; but the purpose of these, and to whom written, we must leave the sequel of our story to explain.

Having no further details of any interest wherewith to fill up the intervening period between the occurrence of the circumstances just related and the marriage of Rosina Adair and William Mowbray, we at once carry forward our narrative to the third day after the celebration of that event. On that day—

"Rosy, my love," said Mr Mowbray, smiling, "I have a proposal to make to you."

"Indeed!—what is it, William?"

"Why, I'll tell you what it is," said the latter; "I wish to go on a visit to a particular friend, and I wish you to go with me."

"Oh, surely," replied Mrs Mowbray. "Is it far?"

"Why, a pretty long way; a two days' journey. Will you still venture on it?"

"Surely—surely, William. Anywhere with you?"

"Thank you, my love," said Mr Mowbray, embracing his young wife.

"Now, I have another proposal to make, Rosy," continued the former; "I wish your father and mother to accompany us."

"What! my father and mother, too!" exclaimed Mrs Mowbray, in great surprise. "Dear me, wouldn't that be odd, William. What would your friend say to such a cavalcade of visiters?"

"Delighted to see them, I assure you, my love. It is my friend's own express wish; and, however odd it may seem, it is a point which must be conceded me."

"Well, well, William, any way you please. I am content. But have you thought of the expense? That will be rather serious."

"Oh, not in the least, my love," replied Mr Mowbray, laughing. "Not in the least serious, I assure you. I will manage that part of the matter."

"Well, well; but my father's consent, William. There's the difficulty. To get him to leave his farm for so long a time; I doubt you will scarcely prevail upon him to do that. He would not live a week from home, I verily believe, although it were to make a lord of him."

"I'll try, Rosy; I'll try this minute," said Mr Mowbray, hurrying out of the apartment, and proceeding in quest of Mr Adair, whom he soon found.

"Leave hame for a week!" exclaimed the latter, on Mr Mowbray's making known to him his wishes on this subject. "Impossible! my dear sir; impossible! Wholly out the question. I hae a stack o' oats to thrash oot; a bit o' a fauld dyke to build; twa acres o' the holme to ploo; the new barn to theek; the lea-field to saw wi' wheat; the turnips to bring in; the taties to bing; forbye a hunner ither things that can on nae account staun owre. Impossible, my dear sir—impossible. Juist wholly oot the question. But ye may get the guidwife wi' ye an' ye like, Mr Mowbray," said Mr Adair, laughing jocosely; "and may keep her too, if ye like."

"Yes—yes. All very well, Mr Adair; but I must have you too, in spite of the manifold pieces of work you have on hand. I have a particular reason for pressing this point, and really will not be denied."

For a full half hour did this sort of sparring continue between Mr Mowbray and his father-in-law; both being resolute—the one to carry his point, the other to keep his ground; but, what could hardly be expected, the former finally prevailed. His urgency carried the day; and Mr

Adair was ultimately, although, we need scarcely say it, reluctantly prevailed on to promise that he would be one of the intended party. Having obtained this promise, Mr Mowbray farther secured its performance by naming the following day as that on which they should set out.

On the following day, accordingly—Mrs Adair's consent having, in the meantime, been obtained, and with much less difficulty than her husband's—two chaises—unwonted sight—appeared at the door of West Mains House; they had been ordered by Mr Mowbray from the neighbouring country town; and, in a little after, out came the party by which they were to be occupied.

"I wad far rather hae ridden the black mare than go into ane o' thae things," said Mr Adair, looking contemptuously at the couple of chaises that stood at the door. "I never was fond o' ridin in cotches a' my life. Nasty, rattlin, jinglin things. Ane micht as weel be shut up in a corn kist as in ane o' them."

Having expressed this opinion of the conveyance he was about to enter, Mr Adair, notwithstanding of that opinion, proceeded, with the assistance of Mr Mowbray, to help his wife into one of them. This done, he followed himself. Mrs and Mr Mowbray stepped into the other chaise. The doors were shut by the coachmen with a bang; and, in the next minute, both the vehicles were in rapid motion.

On the forenoon of the second day after their departure—nothing, in the interval, having occurred worth relating—the party arrived at a certain noble mansion not far from the borders of England. The two chaises having drawn up before the door of this splendid residence, three or four servants in rich livery hastened to release the travellers by throwing open the doors of their carriages, and unfolding the steps, which they did with very marked deference and respect, and with smiles on their faces, (particularly in the case of one not in livery, who seemed the principal of them,) of very puzzling meaning.

On the party having got out of their chaises—"Is this your freen's house, Mr Mowbray?" said Mr Adair, standing fast, and looking up with great astonishment and admiration at the splendid building before him.

"It is, sir," replied Mr Mowbray.

"My feth! an' he maun be nae sma' drink then—that's clear. He has a rare sittin-down here. It's a house for a lord."

"The house is very respectable, certainly," said Mr Mowbray; "and, I think, you'll find the inside every way worthy of the out."

"I dinna doot it—I dinna doot it," replied Mr Adair. "But whar's your freen, himsel?"

"Oh! we'll see him presently. In the meantime, let us walk in." And, taking his wife's arm within his, Mr Mowbray led the way into the house, conducted by the principal domestic, and followed by Mr and Mrs Adair; the latter no less overwhelmed than her husband by the grandeur with which she was surrounded.

Having entered the house, the party were led up a magnificent staircase, and ushered into a room of noble dimensions, and gorgeously furnished. All but Mr Mowbray himself, and the servant who attended, were awe-stricken with the splendours around them. Even Mrs Mowbray was oppressed with this feeling; so much so as not to be able to speak a word; and on her father and mother it had a similar effect. Not one opened a mouth, but continued gazing around them in silent amazement and admiration.

When the party had seated themselves—"Shall I serve up some refreshment, sir?" said the servant to Mr Mowbray, with great respect of manner, but with that perplexing smile on his face.

"Yes, John, do," said Mr Mowbray; "and as quick's you like; for we are all, I fancy, pretty sharp-set; and some of us—I speak for myself, at any rate—not a little thirsty."

The servant bowed and retired. When he had done so—"'Od, sir, ye seem to be greatly at your ease here," said Mr Adair, who was not a little surprised, with the others, as well he might, at the free and easy manner of his son-in-law in his friend's house. "You and your freen maun surely be unco intimate."

"Oh! we certainly are so," replied Mr Mowbray, laughing. "I can use any freedom here—the same as if I were in my own house."

"Weel, that's pleasant and friendly like," said Mr Adair. "But isna your freen himsel lang o' makin his appearance?"

"Rather, I confess; but he'll be here shortly, I daresay—something of a particular nature detaining him, I have no doubt; but, in the meantime, we'll make ourselves at home. I know it will please him if we do so." And Mr Mowbray proceeded to the bell-pull, and rung it violently.

A servant instantly appeared, and received an order, fearlessly given, from Mr Mowbray, to hasten the refreshment in preparation.

Mr Adair's countenance expressed increased amazement at this very unceremonious proceeding; and he felt as if he would have said that he thought it the most impertinent thing ever he had seen done in his life; but he refrained. In this feeling Mrs Adair also partook; and in this feeling Mr Mowbray's own wife shared, although not, perhaps, to the same extent. Not the least curious part, let us observe too, of this odd scene, was that Mr Mowbray seemed to delight in the perplexity of feeling which his proceedings excited in his friends, and appeared studiously to do everything he could think of to increase them.

By and by, the promised repast was served up; and an exceedingly handsome one it was. The party took their seats, no host or hostess having yet appeared—Mr Mowbray placing his wife at the head of the table, and himself taking the foot—and proceeded to do justice to the good things before them. The repast over, wine was introduced. This done, Mr Mowbray—who, to the now utterly inexpressible amazement, and even confusion, of both Mr and Mrs Adair, had all this time been ordering away right and left, as if he had been in a common inn—desired all the attendants to retire. When they had done so, he filled up a bumper of wine, lifted it, rose to his feet and, advancing with smiling countenance and extended hand towards his wife, bade her welcome to *her own house!*

"What!" shouted Mr Adair, leaping from his chair.

"Eh!" exclaimed his wife, doing precisely the same thing by hers.

"William," said Mrs Mowbray, in a voice faint with agitation, and endeavouring to rise from her chair, into which, however, she was obliged again to sink.

"True, my friends," said Mr Mowbray; "all true. This, Mr Adair, is your daughter's house; all that is within it and around it. Welcome again, my love, to your own fireside!" said Mr Mowbray, embracing his wife, "and long may you live to enjoy all the comfort and happiness which Malton House, and ten thousand a-year, are capable of affording!"

Here, then, ends our story, good reader; and, as we do not think you would choose to be much longer detained, especially with dry details of explanation, which are all that now remains to add, we shall be brief.

Mr Mowbray was a young man of large fortune who, having been crossed in love, had imagined that he had been thereby weaned from the world and all its joys; and, under this impression, had sought to retire from the busy scenes of life, with a determination never to return to them again. How he kept to this resolution our story tells.

A HIGHLAND TRADITION.

On the summit of a bluff headland that projects into the Sound of Sky, there stand the grey ruins of an ancient castle, which was once the residence of a Highland chieftain of the name of M'Morrough—a man of fierce nature and desperate courage, but not without some traits of a generous disposition. When about middle age, M'Morrough married the daughter of a neighbouring chief—a lady of much sweetness of manner and gentleness of nature. On the part of the former, however, this connection was one in which love had little share: its chief purpose would have been attained by the birth of a male heir to the name and property of the feudal chieftain; and this was an event to which he looked anxiously forward.

When the accouchement of his lady arrived, M'Morrough retired to an upper apartment of the castle to await the result—having desired a trusty domestic to bring him instant intelligence when the child was born, whether it was a male or a female. The interval he employed in walking up and down the chamber in a fever of impatience. At length the door of the apartment opened, and Innes M'Phail entered. The chieftain turned quickly and fiercely round, glanced at the countenance of his messenger, and there read the disappointment of his hopes without a word being uttered.

"It is even so, then," roared out the infuriated chieftain. "It is a girl, Innes; a girl. My curses on her!"

"Say *girls*, M'Morrough," said Innes, despondingly. "There are twins."

"And both girls—both!" exclaimed the former, stamping the floor in the violence of his passion. "To the battlements with them, Innes!—to the battlements with them instantly, and toss them over into the deep sea! Let the waves of Loch Sonoran rock them to sleep, and the winds that rush against Inch Caillach sing their lullaby. Let it be done—done instantly, Innes, as you value your own life; and I will witness the fidelity with which you serve me from this window. I will, with my own eyes, see the deed done. Go—go quick—quick!"

Innes, who had been previously aware that such would be the fate of a female child, if such should unfortunately be born to his ruthless chief, and who had promised to be the instrument of that fate, now left the apartment to execute the atrocious deed. In less than ten minutes after, Innes M'Phail appeared on the battlements, carrying a large wicker basket. From this depository he took out a child, swaddled in its first apparel, and, raising it aloft, tossed it over to perish in the raging sea below. The little arms of the infant extended as it fell; but the sight was momentary. It glanced white through the air like an ocean bird, and, in an instant after, disappeared in the dark waters of Loch Sonoran. The murderer followed with his eye the descent of his little victim, till the sea closed over it, when, returning to the basket, he took from it another child, and disposed of it as he had done the first.

During the whole of this dreadful exhibition, M'Morrough was standing at a window several yards lower down than the battlements, but so situated in an angle of the building that he could distinctly see what passed on the former. Satisfied that his atrocious decree had been fully executed, he withdrew from the window; and, avoiding an interview with his wife, whom—stern and ruthless as he was—he dreaded to meet with the murder of her infants on his head, he left the castle on a hunting expedition, from which he did not return for three days. On his return, M'Morrough would have waited on his lady, whom he hoped now to find in some measure reconciled to her bereavement, but was told that she would see no one; that she had caused a small apartment at the top of the castle to be hung with black; and that, immuring herself in this dismal chamber, she spent both her nights and days in weeping and lamentation. On learning this, M'Morrough did not press his visit, but left it to time to heal, or, at least, to soothe the grief of his unhappy wife. In the expectation which he had formed from the silent but powerful operation of this infallible anodyne, M'Morrough was not mistaken. In about a month after the murder of her babes, the lady of M'Morrough, deeply veiled, and betraying every symptom of a profound but subdued grief, presented herself at the morning meal which was spread for her husband. It was the first time they had met since the occurrence of the tragical event recorded above. To that event, however, neither made even the slightest allusion; and, whether it was that time had weakened the impression of her late misfortune, or that she dreaded rousing the enmity of her husband towards herself by a longer estrangement, the lady of M'Morrough shewed no violent disinclination to accept of the courtesies which, well-pleased with her having made her appearance of her own accord, he seemed anxious to press upon her. A footing of companionship having thus been restored between the chieftain and his lady, matters, from this day, went on at Castle Tulim much as they had done before, only that the latter long continued to wear a countenance expressive of a deeply wounded, but resigned spirit. Even this, however, gradually gave way beneath the influence of time; and, when seventeen years had passed away, as they now did, unmarked by the occurrence, at Castle Tulim, of any event of the smallest importance, the lady of M'Morrough had long been in the possession of her wonted cheerfulness.

It was about the end of this period, that the haughty chieftain, now somewhat subdued by age, and no longer under the evil influence of those ungovernable passions that had run riot with him in his more vigorous years, was invited, along with his lady, to a great entertainment which was about to be given by his father-in-law. M'Morrough and his lady proceeded to the castle of their relative. The banquet hall was lighted up; it was hung with banners, crowded with a gay assemblage, and filled with music. There were many fair faces in that assemblage; but the fairest of all, were those of two sisters, who sat apart by themselves. The beauty of countenance and elegance of form of these two girls, who seemed to be both about the same age—seventeen—were surpassing. M'Morrough marked them; he watched them during the dance; he could not keep his eyes off them. At length, turning to his lady, he asked who they were.

"They are *your* daughters, M'Morrough," replied the former.

A deadly paleness overspread the countenance of the chief. He shook in every limb, and would have sunk on the floor had he not been supported. On recovering a little, he covered his face with his hand, burst into a flood of tears, and rushed out of the apartment. On gaining a retired and unoccupied chamber, M'Morrough sent for his daughters. When they came, they found him on his knees, fervently thanking God for this signal instance of his mercy and beneficence. He took his daughters in his arms, blessed them a thousand times over, buried his head between them, and wept like a child.



A HIGHLAND TRADITION.

THE PACKMAN'S JOURNEY TO LONDON.

At the next opportunity, I got Sergeant Square to resume the narrative of his adventures.

No feeling that the human mind is called upon to sustain (said he) is more depressing than the consciousness of being alone in a strange place without friend or acquaintance—the populous city and the desert are alike lonely. I have been, in the wildernesses of America and in London, the victim of this saddening sensation, and felt it perhaps less keenly when a solitary wanderer in the trackless wilds; for there bodily exertion, and the hopes of soon being in the haunts of men, deadened its force; while, in the populous city, I felt as if I had, after severe suffering and toil, attained an object to me worse than worthless. Amidst the densest crowds, after all, a man can only feel himself truly alone when no hand is held out to him, no eye beams the glance of recognition, and all is strange as a dream. Such were my feelings on the morning after my arrival in Berwick, on my way to London on foot. Fortune had been adverse to me in my native city, Edinburgh—in truth, I had hitherto been her plaything; and, even now, had no definite object in view. Tired of my walk, I had agreed with the captain of a trader for my passage by sea, for the remainder of my journey; and lay upon my bed, awaiting the morning light, a prey to my feelings, and musing upon my checkered fortunes. The wind began gradually to rise and mourn sadly through the windows and in the chimney of the room where I lay. As the morning advanced, the storm increased and raged, so that no vessel could put to sea. After walking down to the harbour, I returned back to my inn, half resolved not to proceed to the south, but return to Leith in a vessel that was also ready to sail, load with grain. I felt myself as if I had been a child, without a will of my own, not caring what became of me. Had I been seized with a mortal disease, I would, I thought, have welcomed death as a relief; so completely had my spirits, somehow or other, become depressed. How I escaped the pressgang, I have often wondered since; for they were very diligent in impressing seamen at this time, and I was in seamen's clothes. Perhaps the fearless manner in which I walked about, had led them and the informers to suppose that I had a protection, or was belonging to some ship, and at large on leave of absence.

After breakfast, as I sat conversing with one of the captains about the weather and other trivial matters, a person entered the room with a pack upon his back, and inquired if any of the gentlemen would be so kind as look over his assortment of goods; strongly recommending some silk handkerchiefs.

"No," said the person with whom I was conversing, gruffly. "I want none of your goods. You packmen are all swindling knaves."

"Not all knaves, my good sir. There are knaves in all trades, I allow; but there are honest men too." And, addressing himself to me, he repeated his request.

His voice at first had sounded in my ears like some well-known sound, and roused my attention; but in vain I endeavoured to call to mind where I had heard it. I had not yet looked towards him; but the instant I did, a mutual recognition took place. He set his pack upon one of the tables of the tap-room. Our hands were clasped in each other's. "Square!" and "Wilson!" were uttered with mutual feelings of joy and surprise. I had met a companion of my early days and sufferings. Often had we spent the long and chilling winter nights, huddled together to keep each other warm, in the snuggest corner we could find; hungry and ill-clothed, often had we shared the precarious morsel of charity with each other, when either could have devoured it all. We had not met since I had first left Edinburgh, many years before; and, if a tear was shed for my mysterious disappearance, it was by Bill Wilson. A glow of pleasure, such as I had never felt before, thawed the icy feeling that had chilled my mind. How delightful must some of the stronger affections be, when the meeting of an early associate can cause so much delight! We stood gazing in silence upon each other for some time, ere we could find words to express our feelings. At length they were poured forth in congratulations and kind inquiries. To be alone, we retired to my bed-room, where I gave him a full account of all that had befallen me since we last met, and the present unsettled state of my resolves. He heard me, with varying interest, until I had concluded.

"Square," said he, "you have been sorely knocked about, a passive agent, without an object, save to enjoy or suffer the present hour. Now, to succeed, we must have an aim, and hold it in sight, whatever may befall; even should it often elude our grasp, we must not despair or relinquish it for another. My wish is an old age of independence. I may die this night, or I may live until old age has long impaired my energies. To obtain this my wish, I have, from circumstances, chosen my present calling; nor have I allowed the most adverse fortune to shake my resolve, or change my method of recovering it; for perseverance is the only road that leads to success. Fortune placed you in America at your outset in life. You forsook the path others have trod in with success. You prospered at sea, and threw the golden opportunity away for a whim; a third time you were placed in fortune's way; a dark cloud passed over it; you gave way to your feelings, and are once more, with years of lost time, where you commenced."

As he spoke, a feeling anything but gratifying passed over my mind. I felt that what he said was strictly true; that I had been living, until now, without an aim, either of avarice or ambition—my thoughts never having extended to the future, nor a care for to-morrow having ever occupied my mind. His cares, again, were all for to-morrow. This difference could not have arisen from education; for in this we were both alike. He, in short, had more prudence. But to proceed. I requested him to give me an account of the manner in which he had lived since we had been separated.

"You know, John," he began, "that we were twins in adversity upon the streets of Edinburgh, equally friendless and penniless. After your departure, I felt for a few days very sad and lonely. I sought you everywhere in vain,

and made every inquiry; but who cared aught about a homeless beggar-boy? Had a dog as strangely disappeared, the public crier would have proclaimed him through the streets. I began, young as I was, seriously to reflect upon my desolate situation, and plan in my mind ways to mend it. The childish wishes we had often formed of being rich, and the happy dreams of what we would do if we were so, rose with tenfold force into my memory, and I resolved to be rich; but how to attain my aim was the rub. Wishing, I knew well, brought no gain. It must be toiled for, and steadily pursued. A tradesman I could not hope to be. No one would receive me for my labour during my apprenticeship, and clothe and feed me; and I was too young and weak for labouring work in town or country. There was one way alone open to me—to commence merchant. You may smile at the word; but you shall see. It was not my choice; but what have the poor to do with choice? My object now was to obtain a capital to commence business upon. I was far from fortunate. It was nearly a month before I had accumulated a groat; yet, my labour and anxiety were intense. No gentleman appeared on horseback in the city, whom I did not follow, in anxious hopes to get, by holding his horse, a penny, to increase my capital. In messages I was more indefatigable than usual. No length of space or weight of load daunted me, if a penny was to be earned; but it appeared to my eager mind that the gentlemen, at this time, required less service than usual, and those that employed me were more liberal of their food than halfpence. Still I steadily held on unflinching, adding halfpenny to halfpenny, my mind a prey to a new fear, that of losing my treasure. But I had joys mixed with my fears; for, when I retired to a quiet corner, and counted again and again my increasing store, what a pleasure I felt in adding a halfpenny to it, and carefully wrapping up the paper! When I had reached my eightpence, I could delay my undertaking no longer. I felt I had attained my first step; and, with a feeling of importance to be envied, proceeded to a bookseller's shop, and purchased ballads, of which I got, for my groat, one dozen and three, with a piece of paper to wrap them in, and left the shop, exulting that I was now a merchant and had goods to dispose of.

"As it was not my intention to sing them on the streets—for from this my pride revolted—I set off in the direction of Lasswade, calling at every door to offer my wares. In two days I had sold off my whole stock, and returned to town for more ballads. After a time, I added other small books, and my trade prospered amazingly. My living cost me nothing; my voice was good, and a supper and bed to the pedler-boy, were the purchase of my songs, at the cotter's or the farmer's ingle. During the first year, my two groats had grown to nearly a pound, and my ambition had grown with it. Pins, tapes, and thread were added to my store; my excursions were extended, and Bill Wilson was a known and a welcome guest over the whole county of Mid-Lothian. My toil was great, but my strength seemed to increase with my load. I had now in view, my second step in advance, a horse and cart to carry my load. Years had passed on; my pack, worth twenty pounds, was all my own, and I had two pounds in my pocket; it was far on in the year, and the day was short and lowering. I had some goods bespoke for a bridal, which required to be delivered on the following day. My rout lay over the Soutra Hill; and had the weather kept up, my task was easy of accomplishment—so I cheerily plodded on, counting my gains; but scarce had I reached the ascent, when the wind began to moan along the dreary waste, and thin flakes of snow to fall, while the wind, from the east, blew right in my face. I quickened my pace; but the storm increased before I reached the top, the drifting snow blinding me, while the fitful gusts of wind almost blew me off my feet. Cold and biting as was the blast, I was wet with perspiration from my load, and my struggles against the blast. I could not see two yards before me; I was truly alone, in the howling waste, yet I yielded not to despondency, but struggled on for life. I had, it seemed, deviated from the road, for all was now a trackless waste, when suddenly I stumbled and fell on the edge of a declivity, and my pack, the whole of my wealth, bounded from me, in what direction I knew not. It was vain to look for it, in such a situation, in such a storm; but what is wealth under such circumstances, when life is scarcely to be hoped for?

"When I recovered my feet, I was bruised, and began to chill. Hope of escape had nearly fled; despondency was stealing fast upon me; but life is sweet, and so I urged on, as much to overcome the intense cold I felt, as with any hope of finding a shelter from the pitiless storm. The magnitude of my loss never once entered my mind, in this struggle for existence. I would have given all the remainder of my hard earnings for the sight of a cottage, in which to preserve my life. In this, my hour of need, I was snatched from death. As I stood, unable to move a step farther, and on the point of sinking upon the snow, to rise no more, the sound of a dog, barking loudly, fell upon my ear. There was life in the welcome sound; and, with an energy I had felt myself incapable of a minute before, I started off towards the spot from whence the sounds proceeded, calling at intervals with all my strength, and listening as the barking of the dog became more and more distinct. At length I could perceive the light shine dimly through the drifting snow, from a cottage window, which, having reached, I entered, almost exhausted. I was kindly received by the humane inmates, to whom I told my piteous tale. The storm still howled without. The good woman made for me a shake-down upon the floor, close by the fire, whereon to pass the night. After my benumbed limbs were restored to animation, the good man of the house took the book, and, after the worship, in which I joined with a fervour I had never felt before, we all retired to rest, the family speaking all the comfort to me their feeling hearts could dictate, and promising to rise before dawn, to assist in searching for my pack. All was still within; but the storm raged with unabated violence without, and for hours sleep foresook my pillow. I was tormented with heat; pains shot through my frame, and before the dawn I was in a raging fever, and unable to rise. The good people of the house were sore distressed. I gave them the best information I could where to search for my pack; but it was very vague, for I knew not myself the spot where it had bounded from me, and I was at this time two long Scotch miles from the Soutra Hill, and one mile off the highway. The storm of the preceding evening had been followed by a partial thaw, after daybreak; but all, save where the wind had blown the snow from the heights, lay a trackless waste. Far on in the day the searchers returned from their fruitless labours, fatigued and hungry. I was myself much worse; no doctor was to be had nearer than Haddington, neither was there accommodation for me in the house. Ill as I was, I had no choice. A horse and cart were, at my request, procured, and, carefully wrapped up, I was conveyed to Haddington. What followed for some days, I know not. I will hurry on. I would not have been so minute, were it not to shew you that there are shipwrecks and disasters on land, as well as at sea.

"When I recovered my consciousness, I found myself in an obscure garret, the dwelling of a lone and pious widow, who had taken into her house the sick stranger, when all else had refused. I had occupied her only bed, while she passed her nights, seated by her scanty fire, and nursed me in my delirium and fever. The good doctor had attended me as assiduously as if I had been his own son, and aided the widow in supporting me. The snow had been all off

the ground for many days; and whoever had found my store had kept it concealed, for I never heard of it. I was once again penniless, and worse than I was at the commencement; for I was indebted to my kind landlady and the doctor. My two guineas and seven shillings were still in my pocket untouched; for the pious widow had, even in her straits on my account, held them sacred, and they knew from the people who brought me, of my ruinous misfortune. When I became able to move about, I in vain besought them to accept of even one of them, as a remuneration; but their answer was, they would give me credit until I was enabled to pay them in full—and, thank God, I have done this long ago.

"It was well up in February before I could resume my toils. Disheartening as my misfortune had been, my ultimate object, and the means of attaining it, I had never, for one moment, allowed to pass from my mind. It was now that the reward of honesty and fair dealing was felt by me, and proved of immense advantage in enabling me to recover my loss. There was not a merchant with whom I had ever dealed, who did not offer me his goods in trust, to what amount I chose; but to avoid debt has ever been my maxim, and I took no more than my finances would allow. I had only a smaller assortment, and returned the sooner. I was astonished at the rapidity of my own sales—for all had heard of my misfortunes, and pitied me; and, if I was expected, no other packman had any chance. What was required, if not in my pack, I got orders for, and brought them at the appointed time. From that day to this, everything has prospered with me. I have attained my second step, and am now on my way to London, and other towns, to purchase goods, and a horse and cart. To cover my expenses, I am doing a little business by the way. An extensive shop, and at length a competency, are, I trust, not far distant."

By mid-day, the gale of wind had considerably abated; the tide being in the evening, the vessels could not depart. We sat chatting together. The perseverance and success of my companion had made a deep impression on me. I began to think that I might do worse than follow his example; for I had never left my country through choice.

"Wilson," said I, "do you think I could be converted into a packman? I care not what I do for an honest livelihood. I have often heard that an old packman makes a good merchant—I am willing to try if an old merchant can make a good packman. I have a few guineas to purchase goods with. If you will tell me what are the proper kinds, we will go together, by sea, to London, where you are going, and make our purchases: are you agreed?"

"No! Square, no! I will never agree to trust myself upon the fickle element when there is no occasion for it, besides manifest loss. With what goods are in my pack, I will travel free to London, and put a pound in my pocket, at least. If you have any thought of turning to my profession, you must study economy and a placid temper—'take the bit and the buffet with it.' I have not a doubt you may succeed, if you stick to it in earnest; and I have no objection to give you all the information I can, before we part."

I myself had, indeed, no other motive for going by sea to London, than to avoid the fatigue and get quickly there; so it was agreed that I should proceed with him, and learn from his experience. My sailor's dress was sold, and one similar to his own purchased; and, while this was being done, he told me that he had upon his person, carefully concealed, an order from the Royal Bank of Scotland, upon the Bank of England, for one hundred and sixty guineas, which he had doubly secured. It was, he said, not indorsed, nor would he indorse it, until he was obtaining the cash. "There are such things as robberies," he said, "and much worse. I have left a letter and instructions, at the bank, and with Widow Craig, who nursed me in my sickness, (we have been as mother and son since then,) that, if my order is not called for, within twelve months, she is to give my letter to the worthy doctor, who will receive the amount, and administer to the widow's comforts. What remains at her death, I cheerfully bequeath to him. You may smile at this; but our trade is one not without danger even in Scotland; and in England, where highwaymen and footpads are plenty, we travel with our lives in our hands."

Before the evening closed, I was all ready to start upon my new line of life. As Berwick, he said, was not a proper place to lay in a store of goods to sell again with a sufficient profit, I purchased only a few pounds' worth of hardware, Wilson being so kind as sell me, at cost, one dozen of Barcelona silk handkerchiefs, of which he had a great supply, and which he esteemed as valuable and light of carriage. The remainder of my cash he made me take out of my purse, saying, that none but those who knew not the value of money carried it in purses. It was as if the owner had collected it for the first who chose to put his hand in his pocket, or for a vain display.

"Square," said he, "if you had a thousand guineas in your pocket among strangers, never shew or say you have a coin in gold. Tempt no man to evil. The poor travel safe, when the rich are in peril. Allow me to place your guineas in the bank." He then opened the lining of the waistband of my small-clothes, and stitched them in so dexterously that no one could have thought there was coin there. "Now," says he, "we are all ready to start for London on the morning. The way is long, and our burdens heavy; but they will get lighter as we move along. Our lodging for to-morrow night, is Belford; I shall manage so that we shall reach it before dark; the direct distance is only fifteen miles; but we may travel thirty in quest of customers. You are not now, as you were a few months since, to expect that customers will come to you—the pack is a travelling counter, and must move about."

Next morning, after an early breakfast, we crossed the Tweed, and walked on with our packs slung over our shoulders—the weather, cool and pleasing. I felt a buoyancy of spirits I had not experienced for some time; I dreamed waking dreams, and built castles in the air. Wilson sung snatches of songs. I had once more entered on a new walk in life, and begun at the right end, as Wilson said in one of his sage remarks.

"Square, your last misfortune arose from this—you began business at the wrong end; you commenced too soon and too full. No man can manage money well, who knows not, by earning, the value of it. Be prudent—be cunning, too, if you please; but use not your cunning to wrong any one—a shilling won by fraud is a pound of loss. I have known many since I began, who have hastened to be rich by fraud; but they have all failed in their attempts. Those who once dealt, would never deal with them again; their means of success became every journey more circumscribed. Here is a farm-steading—we must try how we are to succeed on the south of the Tweed."

I will not weary you with our hawking adventures. We progressed on our journey with various success; but constantly with gain, our packs lightening apace, I liking the profession very ill. I loved not money sufficiently to bend my mind to the slights and insults we were often forced to endure. Upon Wilson they had no effect in ruffling his temper. He would smile, and, with a slyness of humour, turn their bitterest taunts against the taunters, or banter them into good humour, and effect a sale. He would, indeed, be as good-humoured under insult as if he had been civilly treated, while I was on the eve of bursting into a rage, and either looking sulky, or returning taunt for taunt. Indeed, before we reached Northallerton, I had made up

my mind to relinquish my new calling as soon as we got to London; and told Wilson so. He shook his head.

"John Square, you are one of those that, for want of firmness, never get on in the world. When there is an object to gain, we must not be scared from it by trifles, or neglect an honest means that leads to success. You have commenced at the hardest part of a packman's life—his journey in England. But, ho! here is Northallerton. To-morrow we will strike off the eastern road, and go to York. I expect to meet some acquaintances there."

Thus we journeyed on, I more through a dogged stubbornness not to yield, than any love I had for the mode of life I had chosen, until we were a few miles from York, where we overtook a brother of the trade. As soon as he came in sight, Wilson said, "There is Simon Hepburn, the praying packman, as the profane call him, or Pious Simon, his more befitting name—for he really is a good, well-meaning man. I have known him for some years, neither richer nor poorer; his pack or cash seldom exceeds twenty pounds, yet he could easily increase his store if he had ambition; but that he wants; and his gains are always spent upon objects of charity or piety. He is never without Bibles or pious books, which he bestows, in free gift, where he thinks they may be of use; he has only particular houses where he stops, and he is always a welcome guest, superseding the good-man of the house, for the time, in the Christian office of a teacher. The most pleasing and edifying evenings I have ever spent were with him. When he is in Haddington, Widow Craig's is his home; and, although we are two of a trade, happy am I when we meet. You shall judge for yourself. His history is a most singular one, and nothing gives him more pleasure than to relate it. Let him speak for himself. We quickened our pace, and soon overtook him. He was a man, to all appearance, above sixty years of age; his hair was white as snow, with a shade of care at times upon his regular features, that flitted off, and was succeeded by a gleam of internal satisfaction. The smoothness of his brow, and the fulness of his features, bore a strange contrast to the whiteness of his locks, the appearance of age and youth being strangely combined, while his whole appearance was winning in the extreme. When we came up to him—

Bill said—"Simon, I am happy to have met you; how come you on?"

"Far beyond my deserts," said he. "How are you?—and how did you leave my worthy friend the widow?"

"In good health," said Bill; "I thank you. I have been just talking of you to my friend Square here, who would feel obliged were you to give him an outline of your strange history, as we walk on to York?"

"Certainly, Bill, certainly; it may be of use to him. He is a new beginner in his present craft, as I was when the events happened that I am going to relate."

"The changes that occur both in nations and families," said Simon, "are soon felt by the individuals. Law-suits and bad management had reduced the once extensive patrimony of our family to a small farm. At my grandfather's death, my father, who had married, as his father thought, far beneath him, had three sons. My oldest brother, before he succeeded, went to Holland, having got a commission in the Scots brigade; the second attended the farm, at which I assisted until I was about eighteen. I grew weary of farming, and resolved to become a merchant. I was induced to this by the success of several who had left our neighbourhood, done well after a few years' travel as packmen, and were then settled in various towns, and prosperous. It was in the beginning of May, as soon as the weather became settled, that I left the neighbourhood of Annan, with a few pounds, on my way to Dumfries, and thence to Edinburgh, my object being to furnish my pack. I had a relation of my mother's, a wholesale merchant in the first town, who had promised to do all in his power for me, as far as advice and a few articles would go. Cheerful and full of hope, I strode along, till, within about two miles from Dumfries, I overtook a young and interesting female, accompanied by a young man. We entered into conversation as we walked along. She appeared sad, and often sighed; while he was taciturn, and appeared to avoid conversation. When within a few hundred yards of the town, they stopped behind for a minute or so, and then, the man leaving her, she overtook me, and we entered the town together. I learned from her that she was on her way to Edinburgh, and, having a brother married in Dumfries, she was going to his house for some articles belonging to her, and her fellow-traveller was to meet her there.

"Anxious to commence my new mode of life, I had soon completed my business with my friend. He was standing at the door when I came up with the young woman, and, laughing, inquired if she was my sweetheart or wife. In the course of two or three hours, I was again upon the road towards Moffat, on my way to Edinburgh, with my light pack upon my back, as happy as a king. As I passed the side of a young plantation that skirted the road, a few miles from Dumfries, I saw, lying on the side of the way, a small bundle, tied in a silk handkerchief. I immediately picked it up; and, after standing a few minutes, and looking around to see if any one was in sight who might have dropped it, I called aloud, but there was no answer. I continued my pace, rejoicing in my good fortune. At about a quarter of a mile from the spot, there was a public-house, into which I entered for a little refreshment, and to inquire if they would purchase anything I could supply them. I placed the bundle I had picked up and my pack upon the table, got what I asked for, and then inquired if they would purchase. During my stay, two farm-servants came in; and, when I was about to depart, they, seeing me lift the bundle from the table, inquired if it was my own. I hesitated for a moment, and, unfortunately, said that it was. They looked at each other, no more passed, and I resumed my journey towards Moffat, which I was anxious to reach before nightfall. I accomplished it; and, stopping at a cheap lodging-house, had an early supper, and went soon to bed, weary with my day's walk.

"Scarce had I fallen asleep, when I was aroused by a loud knocking at the door, and the sound of many voices. Before I was fully awake, I was seized in my bed, and my hands bound tightly together. My terror became extreme—I shook in every limb. In vain I strove to speak, and inquire what all this meant. I could only see that every eye was bent on me with an expression of horror and rage. My clothes were searched, and then forced upon me. I was not allowed to assist myself—my hands were unbound—to get on my coat; but a man held each arm, while another pulled. They seemed afraid I would do something desperate, and were as coarse and cautious as if I had been a ferocious animal; yet I was passive from excess of fear; and, although numbers were speaking, I was in such a state that I could not collect the purport of their conversation. Execrations sounded in my ears above the confusion of voices, and the first sentence I made out was spoken by my landlady:—'Oh, the bloody-minded young wretch!' she cried. 'Who would have thought it to look at him? But I hope they will hang him as high as Haman. And, after all, to come into a lone widow's house, to bring disgrace on it. Take him away, sirs, as quick as you can, or I shall be an undone woman, and my character entirely lost.'

'Astonished at what the woman said, I inquired what offence I had committed—or where. O God! what was my horror to learn that I was charged with murder!—that the bundle in my possession had been the property of the victim of some ruthless villain—and that I was taken for him! In vain I protested my innocence. The two men were present

to whom I had said, when they inquired, that the bundle was my own. I was thus, by my own confession—if not a murderer—a convicted liar. No one, for a moment, thought me innocent. So strong was their conviction of my guilt, had the laws not deterred them, they would have rejoiced to have put me to death on the spot. Even this would have been kindness, in a worldly sense, to what I was doomed to suffer.

"It was nearly eleven o'clock at night, but clear and bright; the moon was nearly full; the air a little sharp, but not cold, when I was placed, bound hand and foot, in a cart, and accompanied by the two men and two officers. I thought my heart would have burst. I opened not my mouth to speak in answer to their questions, cruel taunts, and upbraidings. I saw I was an object of horror and loathing to them—and deservedly so, had I been the guilty creature they had cause to think me. I passed the melancholy time we were upon the road in tears and prayers, that my innocence might be made manifest; but I knew not yet the extent of my misery. At length, the cart stopped at the door of the public house; my feet were loosened; and I was desired to come down, and enter the same room where I had been in the afternoon. A crowd of horror-stricken people were huddled round the fire-place. In the wooden bed, lay an object, covered with a white sheet, resembling a human body. I had never seen a corpse laid out in my life; yet the idea rushed upon my mind that this was one; and my blood curdled in my veins, as the conviction came over me that it was one that had met its fate by violence. I trembled, while the large drops of sweat stood upon my brow. All eyes were turned to me; a grim smile of malicious satisfaction was on the faces of some, while horror and pity were equally strongly marked upon the countenances of others. My natural feelings were, to all present, a sure indication of my guilt. I would have sunk to the ground had not the two men supported me. My head fell upon my breast. I requested a little water, in a voice scarce audible. It was given me, and the sickness went off. One of the officers, then, taking a lamp, went to the bed, and removed the sheet from the body. My eyes involuntarily followed him; a cry of horror escaped my lips; and I felt my muscles become rigid. Before me lay the body of the female I had parted with in health early in the forenoon, at the shop-door of my relation, shockingly mangled, her long fair hair clotted with blood, and her mild blue eyes, that had smiled upon me, dulled by the shade of death. I could only groan. My sufferings at this sight were beyond utterance. All in the room moved to the bed, and placed their hands upon the bosom of the body, and protested their innocence. I was ordered to do the same; but I could not summon resolution to touch the body. My whole nature revolted from the contact.

"'I am innocent!' I cried. 'God knows I am innocent. I know nothing of this foul murder. Ask me to cut off my hand, or place it in the burning fire, among the live coals—but ask me not to touch that bloody body, for pity's sake!'

"My appeals were vain; they only served to confirm the prepossessions of my hearers that I was guilty. As I stood, shrinking from the fearful object as far as those who held me would permit, a cry arose that I was the murderer beyond a doubt, and that I should be compelled to touch the body. One of the officers seized my hand; those who held me pushed me towards the bed; I struggled in vain; my hand was held fast as I was forced along; and the consequence was, that it came with force upon the chest of the murdered victim, when a gurgling sound issued from the gaping wound. I became insensible.

"When my faculties returned, it was the grey of the morning. We were entering the town of Dumfries; I in the cart, and the murdered body by my side. I was lodged in the jail—a criminal already condemned in the eyes of my fellow-men. Even the felons and debtors in prison avoided my society. At my examination before the sheriff, I trembled at the array of circumstantial evidence that was brought against me. My own relation admitted, that he had seen us together at his shop-door. The young woman had gone from thence to her brother's, and stayed only a short time—telling them she was on her way to Edinburgh, and was to meet a young man, who was to accompany her there. She had been seen by the two men lingering upon the Moffat road, near the planting, a short time before, with the same bundle in her hand that I had said was mine when they saw me in the public-house with it in my possession. They had thought it strange, but paid no attention until the body of the young woman was discovered in the wood a few hours after, and still warm. I had been pursued, and the property proved to belong to the victim of my cruelty. My terror at being apprehended, and my refusal to touch the dead body, all militated against me. I was fully committed as the murderer, without hope of escape, innocent as I was of the crime. To this damning evidence, all I had to advance was my unheeded assertion of my innocence.

"From the beginning of May until the month of September I lay in jail—a stranger to comfort of any kind. Every anguish was mine, except remorse. I was looked upon by all, except my parents, as the most hardened villain on earth. No one doubted my guilt, except my parents; and it was only their parental feelings that made them doubt and pray that, if innocent, the really guilty might be discovered. I will not attempt to describe the scenes between me and my parents. They both wished that the grave might hide their shame before the fatal day of the execution of their son; for all chance of proving my innocence seemed out of the question. The worthy minister that visited the jail firmly believed in my guilt; to all my solemn asseverations of innocence, he only replied by holding forth on the dangers of hardened crime, with earnest exhortations for me to confess and make atonement as far as was in my power. He would for hours lay before me the horrors of appearing before my Maker with a lie in my mouth. My pride was wounded by the good man's well-meant efforts. I began to avoid him as much as possible; and, when I could not, I was silent and sullen. This, also, was held to be a sure token of my guilt. Alas! I was not hardened; but I was heart-broken. My Bible was my only companion—my soother and support; for I found no threat there but against the guilty. Its author was the searcher of hearts. In it I found I was really guilty of many crimes which my fellow-men thought nothing of; but there I also found a Saviour and Mediator. My mind became humbled and composed; and, while I still solemnly asserted my innocence of the murder, I did it with temper and meekness.

"'Worthy sir,' I said to the clergyman, 'appearances have deceived you. If it is the will of God that the innocent should suffer, for some wise purpose, His will be done. If it is not so, my guiltlessness of blood will be made evident in this world—at least, I shall be declared innocent on that great day when all shall render their account—in this matter, innocent, save of the guilty falsehood I stated, that the unfortunate female's bundle was my own. Alas! I wished not to keep the property from the rightful owner. My thought at the time was, that, if I owned that I had found it, they would take it from me, or make a disturbance about it. Had they only said a few words more, I had told the truth; and thus, probably, have contributed to the proof of my innocence.'

"At length, the Lords of Justiciary entered the town. None but those who are within the walls of a jail, awaiting their arrival, can conceive the dread sensation of fear and

hope awakened in the breasts of criminals by the clang of the trumpets and shouting of the mob, as the pageant proceeds through the streets. How bitter are the feelings produced by the joyous shouts of the thoughtless people! forgetful, or heedless, of the fates of their fellow-mortals. Next day, I was led into the court, more dead than alive. My head became giddy. Everything before me—the crowded court, the judges, jury, and officers—became a confused mass; a murmur as if of horror sounded in my ears from the assembled multitude; the fatal bundle lay upon the table before me. At length, all was ready; and —the indictment having been read aloud by the clerk—the judge, in a solemn voice, asked if I was guilty or not. After a gasp or two for breath—

"'O my Lord!' I said, 'I am as guiltless of this crime as the unborn babe. Have mercy on me!' And I sank upon the table before me, overpowered.

"The public prosecutor then opened the case, and harrowed up my soul with the fearful account of the diabolical deed. He almost persuaded me I was the murderer; so clearly did he reason from appearances. The witnesses were called; a chain of circumstantial evidence was made out; all that was awanting in it was, that I had not been seen to do the deed. Witnesses I had not one. Those whom I could have called could have said nothing but what they had already said, and it was wrested to my disadvantage by my own story; for I was a self-convicted liar, and little better than a thief, in my attempt to appropriate what was not my own—even in the most favourable construction my able counsel could put upon my case. The jury, without leaving their box, pronounced me guilty, without a dissentient voice. The judge put on the fearful black hat upon his head; and, after a heart-harrowing peech upon my guilt, pronounced sentence of death upon me. I was to be taken back to the jail, and from thence to the spot where the murder had been committed, and hung in chains on the second market-day in October. How I was removed from the court I cannot tell; neither can I tell what intervened for some hours. The last thing strongly impressed upon my memory is a burst of satisfaction in the court, when the sentence was passed upon me, and the hooting of the crowd without; yet, strange to say, I slept soundly after the irons were riveted upon my ancles, and awoke to find my doom fixed, and my days on earth numbered. I became, in a manner, resigned to my fate. Indeed, save for my parents, I had no other regret in leaving the world; yet, at times, an anxious wish would steal upon my mind that I might be saved from my unmerited death. It was the shuddering of nature at entering upon eternity. The hope never left me that my innocence would, at one time or another, sooner or later, be made manifest to my fellow-men—for murder will not hide, nor innocent blood cry from the earth in vain. The hours flew past with fearful rapidity; the neighbouring clock seemed never to cease to strike the hour. Night followed day, and day night, as if there was no interval between; yet there was a heaviness upon me that bowed me down. My last Sabbath on earth arrived; the day was spent in devotion—my heart-broken parents, who now were convinced of my innocence, pouring out their souls with mine to the Throne of Grace. If ever there was on earth a foretaste of the joys of Heaven, I felt it that day in the condemned cell, loaded with irons. We had taken farewell of each other in the full assurance of soon meeting where there is no sorrow or shame. The bitterness of death was past. My thoughts were no longer of this world.

"The Monday passed on. There was but one whole day more for me on the earth. Wednesday was to be my last. On the morning of Tuesday, as soon as the jail was opened, my brother, who had always thought hardly of me, and visited me only twice, rushed into my cell, and, weeping, fell upon my bosom. After a few moments, he sobbed—

"'My brother! Simon, my brother! can you forgive me for thinking so hardly of you?'

"'My brother,' I replied, 'I have ever thought of you in grief and pity, never in anger. My heart blesses you for this kindness.'

"'You are innocent, my own Simon! You are cleared of this crime. All is made manifest. The worthy minister is at present with the provost, who will write to the sheriff to delay the fatal day, until your pardon come.'

"I heard no more; a faintness came over me; my heart ceased to beat, and all consciousness left me for some time. When I recovered, we fell upon our knees and poured out our souls in thanksgivings. At that time, I dedicated the whole remainder of my days to the service of that merciful God who had made clear my innocence, and spared my parents and friends from shame.

"When we had become composed, I learned from him the wonderful manner in which my innocence had been discovered, and the guilty punished by the hand of the sufferer's own brother. She had resided in the parish of Caerlaverock—with a brother, a widower, as his housekeeper, for some years—and it had been understood that she was soon to marry a young man, a stranger, who had come some years before into the parish. He was on intimate terms with her brother; but her other friends did not approve of the connection, as his character was none of the best. Her brother was of a thoughtless, jovial disposition, and saw no harm in him, for he was an excellent boon-companion, and they were thus inseparable on all occasions of festivity. On the Saturday afternoon, before the day appointed for my execution, they had gone out with their guns to shoot for amusement. Both had been drinking pretty hard; and it was observed that the stranger had for some time almost entirely given himself up to intoxication, especially since the death of Grace, his sweetheart. This was attributed to his grief, and begat pity for him, and no one was more assiduous in endeavouring to cheer his gloom than her brother. After their search for game, they were returning to the village, when, by some accident, the gun which Grace's brother carried, went off and lodged its contents in the body of his companion, who fell, dreadfully wounded. A surgeon was sent for, who gave little hopes of his recovery. No blame could be attached to his companion, as the accident was seen by severals, and the grief of Grace's brother was excessive. On the Sabbath, the stranger was much worse. His mind seemed to suffer more than his body; and words of fearful import escaped from him at intervals, which harrowed up the souls of those who attended him. Cries of despair, mixed with horrid imprecations, burst from his lips. Yet death evidently was approaching fast to seize his victim. When they spoke of sending for the minister, to pray with and console him, he blasphemed, and thus spent he his last Sabbath on earth. Through the night he fell into a troubled sleep, and began to mutter. Gradually his words became more distinct. He talked of Grace, and recounted her murder as he had perpetrated it; writhed in remorse, and called for mercy from my injured spirit, as if I had already suffered. As soon as the morning dawned, the minister was sent for; and what the guilty man had said in his sleep, recounted to him. He was now very low; the hand of death was on him; and, for some time, he was deaf to the remonstrances of the divine. But, at length, he confessed all; told that they would find the knife with which he had done the fearful crime, buried at the back of the cottage where he lay. All was written down by the minister. The knife was found, stained with the blood of his victim. I was now as much the object of pity, as I had been of hatred and horror. That day my irons were struck off; I had the

freedom of the jail until my pardon arrived; and was visited by numbers of the inhabitants, who loaded me with presents. But my feelings of gratitude were principally awakened on my parents' account, for the joy it imparted to them. Many, many years have passed since that event, but it is ever present with me, and spurs me on in my labours of love, in comforting and winning souls to God."

So deeply had I been interested in the narrative of the Pious Pedlar, that we had reached York, and stood at the door of the Duke of Marlborough public-house, before I was aware of the distance we had walked after he commenced. As this was the house where Bill, and a number of others in his line, were in the habit of staying during the time they were in the town, we entered, and found two or three, who, like ourselves, had come to purchase goods. I was astonished at the haughty manner in which they returned our salutation. The landlord, who seemed to know all his guests well, received William and Simon with a hearty welcome; and, shaking me by the hand, wished me success in my new calling; expressing his hope that I would find everything in the Marlborough to my liking. We were then ushered into a small room, where dinner was to be served to us. When we were comfortably seated, I remarked to Bill the impression the lofty bearing of the others had made upon me, and inquired if he knew the cause. He laughed—

"Quite well," said he; "there is an aristocracy among pedlers as well as other callings. They belong to the waggoners, and would think it a degradation to associate with us bearers. We are a grade beneath them; besides, the waggoners are, for the most part, gentlemen by birth—the younger cadets of decayed houses of long standing. With a little capital to commence with, they never dealt in small quantities, their line lying in supplying the retailers in distant towns; and many of them are very wealthy. Upon my return from London, when I have purchased my horse and waggon, I will be entitled to rank with them, but will never be treated as the equal of those who have both birth and waggons; nevertheless, I will be a waggoner until I commence business in my own shop, when I will be a grade higher than even waggoner; and, with economy and my usual perseverance, I may be a bailie, or even provost, of the town I settle in. Only think of that, John Square! Stick to your present occupation, and, without trusting the stormy ocean, you may, by following my counsel, succeed as well as I or any one."

"My young friend," said the pious Simon, "all these are good in subjection; but a higher aim ought to be your guide through life; for all these give not peace to the soul."

While he spoke, we were joined by other two of our own rank, to whom my two companions were barely civil, and very distant. Both were well advanced in years, with a forward cast of countenance and a look of low cunning strangely blended, which they endeavoured to make pass for frankness. Having settled our small bill, and left our packs in charge of the landlord, I walked out to see the Minster, they to transact some business of their own.

I returned when the shades of evening fell, and found that Wilson and Simon had arrived some time before me, and were seated by themselves. There were several others in the room in general conversation, in which we took no part. The two whom I had left before I went out were still in the same position, evidently under the influence of liquor. They were clearly unwelcome, their conversation was only calculated to beget disgust in well-regulated minds, consisting of anecdotes of fraud and imposition, of which they seemed proud of being the heroes.

"These two," said Simon to me, "are a specimen of those who bring disrepute upon any callings, and much more so on ours. They are not without talents, but they cultivate them to unprofitable ends. I have known them for many years, and, with all their boasted cunning, they are, I believe, poorer at this moment than they were when I first knew them, and must still become poorer, for their character is gone. The public fear to deal with them, and will not do it even when they would act honestly. They are forced to range far, to places where they are unknown; and even there they are every year circumscribing and planting thorns for others to walk over. They, besides, are ever under the fear of injury from some one or other whom they have defrauded. Such are the fruits of dishonest dealing."

All our business being transacted, it was agreed that we should continue our route for London, to purchase silks and light goods, and return by the same route to Scotland. William having purchased a small waggon and horse, together with a small assortment of woollens, my stock remained much the same, and was slung over my shoulder, save when, for ease, and there were no houses on the road, I placed it in the waggon; for I was weary of my pedler's life, and only endured it until I should reach London. We arrived at Hatfield, about twenty-five miles from London, early in the afternoon, and resolved to stay for the night, as Wilson had hopes of doing some good in the neighbourhood. As for me, I had ceased, much to his chagrin, to attempt any sales, as my pack was now much reduced. While he was gone, I sat at the inn door, amusing myself in the best manner I could—sometimes musing on my strange fate, at others gazing listlessly upon the passers by—when a post-chaise drove up to the door at a furious rate. The horses were extremely blown and covered with perspiration. A gentleman and lady descended from the chaise; she evidently was under restraint, and looked anxiously and fearfully around. Our eyes met; I thought she gave her hand that was disengaged, a movement, as if she wished me to come to her. She was in tears. I rose, and moved to approach, but she was hurried into the house before I could advance; for I was in doubt—yet her look expressed what her hand signaled. I thought it strange, for a moment; but this feeling died away, for I might have been deceived. The gentleman came to the door to hurry the people, as they were rather slow, as he thought, in procuring fresh horses. I good-naturedly went to assist the postillion. As I stood before the chaise, I looked up to one of the windows, and saw the female weeping at it. Our eyes again met; she clasped her hands imploringly, and, taking a small packet, placed it behind the window-shutter, and, raising her clasped hands to heaven, looked earnestly at me. I gave a nod of assent. She retired from the window. All this had passed quickly as a shadow. In a few minutes they were again in the chaise. As it passed off, I again gave a nod, and a languid smile passed over her face. I entered the house, and inquired of the landlord who they were; but got no information, as he said they were unknown to him. I requested to have a glass of brandy and water in the room where the lady had been. As soon as it was brought, and he had retired, I looked behind the window-shutter, and, taking out the parcel, found it to contain a sum of money, and a sealed letter, upon the inside of the wrapper of which was written in pencil—"Benevolent stranger, whoever you are, for mercy's sake and all that is dear to you, deliver this as directed, with your utmost despatch, and snatch a fellow-creature from misery. Let this supply your immediate wants, and an ample reward shall follow. Use all despatch, I again implore you."

I was, for a few minutes, lost in amazement. The letter was addressed to Captain James H——, Strand, London. Could this be my old patron and captain? There was not one moment to lose. I descended to the bar, and told the landlord I must set off for London immediately, and requested his advice how I was to proceed. He told me I must make the journey on horseback, as he had not

another pair of horses. I told him that was impossible, as I had never been on horseback in my life, and I could walk it faster and with more ease than I could ride. I would walk on to Barnet before dark, and get a chaise there if I could find none sooner. As I was on the eve of setting off, he found means to procure an old phæton; and, while it was getting ready, I wrote to Wilson that circumstances forced me to London, but that I would perhaps see him in the morning. At all events, I made him heartily welcome to my pack, as I meant to carry it no more, wishing him health and prosperity if we should not meet.

I mounted the high-hung crazy vehicle, with a lad to drive and bring it back, having satisfied mine host to his utmost wish. By half-past ten o'clock, I reached the jeweller's in the Strand, whose first floor Captain H—— occupied, and found him at home. His lady was also present. His surprise was great at my entering. Our joy was mutual, and only damped by my relating the strange manner in which I had again had the pleasure of seeing him. He broke the letter open, and having hastily perused it, turned to his wife, who sat pale and anxiously looking at him—"My love, I must be off this instant, and endeavour to rescue Catherine from her unpleasant thraldom. Do not be alarmed—there is no danger. During the time I am getting all ready, you may peruse the letter." Saying this, he rung the bell, and ordered his servant to procure a post-chaise as quickly as he could, and send in refreshments for me. Mrs H—— was dissolved in tears, as she had read the letter to an end. When we were again alone, "James," said she, "this proceeding of Master Wilton is very cruel to my cousin; although he is her guardian, he has, I should think, no right to wound her feelings, and hurry her about the country in this mysterious manner. I am fearful he has some reason he is ashamed to confess. My dear James, be careful of yourself for my sake; I shall be miserable until your return."

"There is not the smallest occasion, my love; I shall write you as soon as I arrive at Mr Wilton's. In the morning, you must write a note to Mr Stenton, to call upon you. Shew him your cousin's letter, and order him to take what steps he may judge necessary in this affair."

"Can it be possible," said she, "that my aunt approves of this proceeding? He could not have removed Catherine without her consent."

"I shall soon know, my love. The dear girl must not be allowed to suffer from their designs or caprice."

At this moment the chaise was announced to be at the door, and in a short time we were in it, and rattling along towards Barnet, where we changed horses, and were in Hatfield a little after daybreak. During our dark and comfortless ride, I told him all that had befallen me since we parted in Lisbon. He had only been in London a few months, where he had come upon business—an uncle of his wife's having died some time before, leaving the bulk of his fortune to his two nieces—Catherine, the young lady whose letter I had brought to London, and his wife. To Catherine, his favourite sister's daughter, he had left, besides an equal sum in cash, all his landed and other property. Mr Wilton's sister, the aunt of both, was a rich widow, but of a morose and finical temper. Catherine had been brought up by her some fifty miles from London, and Mr H—— had no idea until my arrival that she had not been still with her. "I hope there is no foolish love affair in this strange business," said he; "for Catherine is a warm-hearted, susceptible girl. Her father was our countryman, and my intimate friend."

As Mr Wilton's property lay near Baldock, about eighteen miles distant, and no post-horses were to be got, the captain, on horseback, set off alone; I was to follow on foot, which I preferred, to Stevenage, where I was to wait until I heard from him. After a hasty parting from my fellow-traveller Wilson, which was not without regret on both sides I set off for Stevenage; he saying, as he shook my hand—

"John Square, I hope you will never want, but you will never be rich. You are as unstable as water."

I had only been in the inn at Stevenage a short time, when a servant arrived with a note, informing me that Captain H—— had got all arranged to his satisfaction, and would return to London on the following day, requesting me to return to London with a letter for Mrs H——; which I did, and took lodgings for myself in Lower Thames Street. When the captain and I again met, I found present the young lady and another gentleman. I was most graciously received by all. The uncle of Catherine was likewise present, and, turning to his nieces, said—"So this is the messenger you contrived to engage, strictly as I watched you in this foolish affair. I see that a woman's invention, like her love, has no bounds"—saying which he good-humouredly patted the happy and blushing Catherine under the chin. The captain retired with me to a separate room, where he told me that the whole had arisen out of the anger of his wife's aunt, who had set her heart upon marrying her niece to a young clergyman of her neighbourhood, for whom she had not the smallest regard, and whose assiduities were hateful to her, as her heart was already engaged to Mr Stenton, a distant relation of her own; but, as his circumstances were not sufficiently prosperous to enable them to marry, she had concealed their love from all but Mrs H——.

The death of her uncle, and my arrival in London, altered her views. She rebelled against her aunt's authority, and refused to see the clergyman as a lover. This threw the old lady into a paroxysm of rage. Poor Catherine was locked up, and, all her repositories being searched, Mr Stenton's letters were found. They were immediately sealed up and a letter written to Mr Wilton, her brother, of the most alarming kind for the safety of his now wealthy niece, representing that she meant to throw herself and fortune away upon some peasant in the neighbourhood. He had posted, on receipt of the packet, to his sister, when his fears were futher excited by the old lady's conjectures. Catherine was unconscious of what had passed until she was summoned to the presence of her uncle, whom she had seldom before seen. He is a good-hearted, but a positive, irascible man. No explanation was asked. When all appeared so plain against the trembling girl, she was, by her uncle and aunt, hurried into a post-chaise, and was on her way to Mr Wilton's. She had contrived to write to me during the short time she was allowed to prepare for the journey, but had no opportunity until, struck by your manners, she resolved to shorten her confinement by trusting you, as her uncle's anger was so great that he had scarce spoken to her since they entered the chaise, but to threaten and abuse her. When I arrived, an explanation and reconciliation had taken place, and the marriage will follow in a few weeks. It only remains for you to consider in what manner we can serve you."

I returned him my thanks for their kind intentions; and said the young lady's purse, which I would not affront them by offering to return, was much more than sufficient reward for all I had done; and, begging I might not detain him longer from his friends, I bade him adieu, promising to call in a dav or two.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF IDIOTS.

The very foundation of idiocy is peculiarity; whatever this unfortunate class may want, they do not want those features by which they are distinguishable from the ordinary ranks of mankind. Hence the interest which idiocy has ever exerted, and the splendid creations which, under the name of asylums, quiet country residences, &c., have been made for their accommodation. The great mass of society, with the exception, perhaps, of a kingdom which shall, for the present, be nameless, have nothing *idiotical*—that is, peculiar—belonging to them exclusively. They move as others move, dress as others dress, think as others think, and worship God as others do and as others did. Were it not for *idiots*, in the extended sense of the word, there were an end of plays, novels, and all works of fiction. Very few women, if we may credit Pope, are idiots; for he says—

> "Nothing so true as what you once let fall—
> Most women have no character at all;
> Matter too soft a standing mark to bear,
> And best distinguished by black, brown, or fair."

But, although the original meaning and enlarged sense of the term might carry us into a field thus almost boundless, we shall at the present limit ourselves to two classes of idiots, comprehending, as they do, a great variety of species. First, the natural idiot, or the simply fatuous: of these there are *two* varieties—the peaceable and the frantic. Secondly, the unnatural or rational idiot: of these the varieties are infinite, and a selection only is in the present instance either desirable or attainable.

We return then to the purely fatuous, or peaceable idiot.

Poor innocent! as he is uniformly and kindly named by the neighbourhood. There he walks about, along that stream, or across that meadow, from morn to night, and from night to morning, his hand at his cheek, and his lips muttering incoherence, such as, "Johnnie, quo' he, lad; ah, ha, Willie lad, Willie lad, Willie lad." He is so biddable that a child may make him lie down, or rise up, enlarge or shorten his step. He will carry a peat-barrow when peats are a-casting, ted hay, or lift a child safely over a fence; yet, for all that, he is not always to be trusted—for there are times when his countenance gets flushed, his frame nervously convulsed, and then he utters dreadful things, and becomes violent and unmanageable. These are, however, only aberrations, not continued character; and, by watching the symptoms of approaching storm, the effects may be easily avoided. Idiots even of this peaceable and innocuous kind, are now abstracted from their natural and kindly hearths, and concealed in asylums and private residences. Not so—it was not indeed so—in the olden times. The hereditary possession of at least one 'innocent' in a family, was deemed a blessing. "There never will be wanting," said the pious parent, "a bit for thy helplessness, poor Johnnie." Good luck took up her residence under the roof where such a one resided; and the parent was doubly attached to *the object*, as he was sometimes called. To hurt him, or injure him in any manner of way, was domestic treason; and even the schoolboy, on his harvest rambles, only pelted him with nuts and brambleberries. Poor Johnnie! he was missed one day; he had wandered beyond his ordinary reach, and all the town was in motion searching for him. The night came on, dark, and even drifty; and the poor helpless object could nowhere be found. Shouts were raised, dogs were dismissed on errands of inquiry, herd-boys ran, and servant lads greatly hastened their pace. At last, he was discovered on the brink of a precipice, over which he was suspended by the coat tails, which a strong shepherd's dog was holding fast in its teeth. But for the powerful sagacity of this brute, the helpless being had been dashed to pieces. When he was rescued from his dangerous position, he was repeating, in his usual manner, "Johnnie's a-caul quo' he, lad." He was never suffered to be in such danger again. These eyes saw him on his death-bed; and, at the instant of his departure, it was indeed a most affecting scene.

> "The soul's dark cottage, shattered and decayed,
> Let *in* new light through chinks which time had made."

As the pulse ebbed and the feet swelled, reason seemed to resume her long deserted seat. He actually raised himself upon his elbow, drew the back of his hand twice across his brow, as if clearing away some obstruction from his eyes, and, looking around with an eye unusually bright and beaming, lambent like an expiring taper—

"Oh, what a dream! what a dream! But, I see you all now; yes—yes—I see my kind mother, my dear father, my sister! Yes—yes—I am now well. I am awake—I live." Hereupon the fatal and well-known struggle in the throat stopped his speech; he fell back, gave one deep sigh, and was at rest. Poor Johnnie! if a tear of gratitude can gratify anything that lives, bearing the most distant relationship to thee, that tear has now been shed. Heaven has long been merciful to the poor Innocent.

But the frantic idiot who now struggles against the chain and the strait waistcoat in yonder cell. He too, at one time, roamed at large, to the great alarm, but seldom to the injury of the lieges—"his bark," as the people said, "was waur than his bite;" and, if at any time he required to be confined by force, a few kindly words and soothing accents threw oil on the troubled sea, and restored comparative serenity. Daft Will Gibson rises before me; his long rung or kent by way of staff, his Kilmarnock night-cap, and shoes of many patches, his aversion to all manner of trick or nickname, and his furious onset when pursued by school-boys: all these circumstances rise again from the dark past, and glare before me like the shades in Macbeth. Yet, though occasionally furious, and even dangerous, he was kind-hearted, and not unobservant of character. The timid he rejoiced to terrify, whilst he passed by the bold and firm unmolested. Though he often threw large stones at those who assailed him, he took special care always to throw short of his object. But one day a little child, unobserved by him, had crossed the pathway of his missile after it had been delivered, altogether unobserved by poor Will. The child was knocked down and greatly injured—it bled profusely. Will seemed horror-struck, and roared aloud—

"It was I! It was me! It was daft Will Gibson!"

From that day he never lifted another stone, but always exhibited the greatest liking for this child—of which the following anecdote is sufficient proof. A little boy was playing in the channel of a mountain torrent, then almost dry. There was thunder in the distance, and Queensberry had put on her inky robe of darkness. All at once, the burns began to emit a loud, roaring, rattling sound, and down came the Caple Water—as my informant, who witnessed the scene, said—like "corn sacks." The boy, owing to his eagerness in pursuing a trout (which he was endeavouring to catch) from stone to stone, did not hear or see the approaching danger, till the mighty flood was upon him. My informant—a shepherd—threw aside plaid and staff, and ran to the rescue; but the red and roaring flood was before him; and a fine boy of seven or eight years old would undoubtedly have lost his life, had it not been for the poor maniac, who chanced to be pulling rushes hard by. He rushed into the flood just as it was oversetting the helpless victim, and, with a tremendous jerk, threw him clear upon the green bank of the torrent. He then endeavoured himself to clear the bank; but the treacherous and hollow earth, under the pressure of the water, gave way, and down tumbled brow and man into the raging whirlpool—the man underneath, the brow above him. The boy, by means of his heels, escaped; but poor Will Gibson's body was next day found some miles lower down, sadly disfigured and mangled. Thus did this grateful maniac expiate the inadvertent injury which he had done this very boy when a mere child, by saving his life at the expense of his own.

We now pass, in prosecution of our history, from darkness into light, from the irresponsible and irrational agent, to the responsible and foolish. Our guide here, in this *mare magnum* of idiocy, shall be *the use* of language in discussing the various merits of the different classes. We shall make use of no new phraseology, but be guided to our purpose by the acknowledged and recognised use and meaning of terms. Why the word "idiot" is retained in conversational language in particular, when its original and more legitimate meaning is lost, we have already pointed at; it is owing to analogy and resemblance that in this case, as in many others, such terms are legitimate and expressive.

There is, then, in the first place, to come at once to the point—there is

"The Havering Idiot."

Horace gives a most correct idea of this class in these well-known lines:—

"Hunc neque dira venena, nec hosticus auferet ensis
Nec laterum dolor, aut tussis aut tarda podagra,
Garrulus hunc quando consumet." . . .

Galt, too, has hit off the character, under a feminine aspect, in his "Wearifu' Woman;" but we have no occasion to ask Horace for his spectacles, or Galt for his microscope, in order to discover the features of this most numerous and annoying class. Midges, in a new-mown meadow, are terribly teasing; so are peas in one's shoes—particularly if unboiled. There is a certain cutaneous disease which is said to give exercise at once to the nails and to patience. Who would not fret if placed naked, all face over, in a whin bush? To be teased and tormented with grammar rules is vastly provoking; and to get the proof questions by heart cannot be deemed anything but annoying. A showery day, when you have set out on a long-meditated "pic-nic," will vex the most patient soul into spleen; and marriage-settlements are frequently great sources of heartburnings and delays. To be told that your house is on fire, when your messenger is on his way to effect an insurance, may possibly give pain; and to find that every pipe is frozen, so that there is not a drop of water for the engine, may probably add to your chagrin. All these, and a thousand other miseries to which human flesh is heir, may, nay, must be borne; but the torment of coming into ear-shot of a "havering idiot," is a thousand and a thousand times more insupportable. You are placed beside him at table, and in a mixed company of men of literature and science, whom probably you may never see again. A subject is started, which, from peculiar reasons, happens to be not only of itself curious, but exceedingly interesting to you, professionally in particular. Professor Pillans is discussing education, or Combe is manipulating heads; Sir David Brewster is describing the polarization of light, or Tom Campbell is thrilling every heart with poetic quotations;—no matter, you are unfortunately in juxtaposition to a "havering idiot," and about five removes from the focus of general conversation. He will not let you rest for a moment, but is ever whispering into your ear some grand thing which he said last evening at Lady Whirligig's ball. You push your dish forward, and fix your eyes upon the intelligent speaker. He observes, and mistakes, or seems to mistake, your movement and your motive, and immediately hopes he may help you to the dish you are after. You are fairly *dished;* and unless you knock him down with your fist in the first place, and shoot him afterwards, you have no resource but to repeat the lines of Horace, already quoted, and submit to your fate.

His stories are infinite and inextricable; but, unlike the epic, they have neither a beginning, a middle, nor an end. When he starts with "I'll tell you a good thing," you listen for an instant, but immediately perceive that you are on the wrong scent; and, as he advances, he is ever admonishing you with his elbow of the many *hits* he is making; and having heard him out—if that be possible!—you immediately exclaim, "Well!" thinking assuredly the cream of the joke is yet awaiting you.

But, sir, you are making no meal at all. You must try some of that fine honeycomb; it is most excellent; it is of our own making; for, I may say, we have almost everything within ourselves. The bees, last season, did not do well at all; but they have done better this, sir. You are a natural philosopher, sir—can you tell me how the bees see their way back again to their houses, when they go far away in search of flowers and honey?"

"Just the way, I suppose, ma'am, that they see their way a-field."

"Oh, ay—I ken that; but I hae a book here—(go away, Jeannie, and bring me the book on natural history; the Cyclopædia, ye ken.) Now, sir, this book tells me that, from the shape of their eye, the bees canna see an inch before them—how then do they travel miles and miles, and never lose their road?—but bless me, sir, you're no making a meal at no rate. Ay, here's 'the article,' as it is called. Read that, sir, just at the bottom of the 196 page," &c. &c.

"The Blethering Idiot"

is manifestly twin-brother to the haverer, with this small difference, however, that the bletherer is a mere repeater or reporter of havers. The one is the importer, as it were, of the article, wholesale, and the other retails the article thus imported. They are raw commodity, and manufactured goods—they are original and copy—cause and effect. Burns was quite aware of this when he wrote—

"And baith a yellow George to claim,
And thole their blethers."

These blethers were not original inventions, but merely varnished repetitions. The blethering idiot is most dangerous as well as most disagreeable. In this respect, he even surpasses the haverer, whose annoyances terminate in themselves in the irritations and inconveniences of the moment. But the bletherer is a dangerous friend, an inveterate foe, and a most unsafe neighbour. Will Webster was the intimate friend of poor James Johnston. James

was a lad of honest intentions, fair talents, and warm feelings. He was educated as an engineer, and had already acquired a certain status and character in that capacity. His friend Webster had been accidentally a school companion from the proximity of their dwellings, and the intimacy of their parents. Webster had studied law, and was about to pass advocate, when he came to meet his friend, and spend a harvest vacation with him at Castledykes, in the parish of Tynron, Dumfriesshire. The two young men were in the bloom and strength of youth, being both some months under twenty-one. Georgina Gordon was the daughter of a small neighbouring proprietor, (a Dunscore laird,) an only daughter, her father's prop, (her mother having died at her birth,) and the admiration of everybody who merely saw her at church on Sunday, or who knew her intimately. I should have mentioned before that this beautiful flower had been named Georgina with the view of perpetuating the name of a brother whose fate had been involved in obscurity. He had betaken himself early to sea, and the vessel in which he sailed had never more, during several years before Georgina's birth, been heard of. All possible inquiries had been made, but without effect. The Thunderer, Captain Morris, had been seen off the coast of South America; but no more was known. James Johnston was already in the way of making reasonable proposals to any one; but his heart had long been fixed at Castledykes. He used to wander for hours and days along the glen of the cairn, and within sight of the old family abode. Georgina, however, had already many lovers, and was reported to have, in fact, made a selection. It was again and again reported by Will Webster to his friend Johnston, and to everybody who took any interest in the report, that he had seen Georgina enter the Kelpie Cave in company with a lover, and that he had even seen them fondly embracing each other. At first, Johnston gave no heed to Will's *blethers*; but still they gradually made an impression upon him. He became, at last, decidedly jealous, when, led and guided by his friend Will, he beheld, with his own eyes, a male figure closely wrapped up in a plaid holding secret converse with the lovely Miss Gordon. What will not jealousy, goaded on by officious and injudicious friendship, do? Unknown to any one, Will met and accosted the figure in the dark—a struggle and a contest with lethal weapons took place, and the stranger fell. No sooner had the deed been done than James saw and repented of his rashness. The wound which he had inflicted was bound up; and the fainting man, help being procured, conveyed to Castledykes. James Johnston was not the man to fly, even should death prove the consequence of his rashness. A curious denouement now took place—the person whom James had wounded was no other than the long lost George Gordon. The vessel in which he had sailed had not been wrecked, as was supposed, but had been taken, skuttled, and sunk by Spanish privateers, who then infested the Leeward Islands. He had been bound and fettered in the hold, till he came under a solemn promise neither to desert nor abandon his colours in the hour of battle. Under such discipline, it was no wonder that, in a few years, George Gordon (now taking the Spanish name of Joan Paraiso) should be habituated to all manner of rapine and bloodshed. From less to more, by acts of heroism, he became second, and, ultimately, first in command of a Spanish privateer.

England having viewed this growing evil with a suitable indignation, sent out her armaments to the west; and the Don Savallo, Joan Paraiso, commander, was taken. The prisoners were conveyed to Britain; and it being discovered that Paraiso was originally a British subject, he was thrown into prison to abide his trial. From this he escaped, almost by a miracle, and wandering over the kingdom in another domino, or assumed name, he came at last, as if by the law of force and attraction, to his native glen. But he durst not yet discover himself, for he was an outlaw, and the papers were filled with rewards for his apprehension. In this situation he discovered himself, under the most dreadful oaths of secrecy, even from his own father, (at least for a time,) to his sister. The rest, up to the period of his wound, which was by no means dangerous, is easily understood. What follows will be necessary to complete the narrative:—James Johnston having learned all this from Georgina, who, in a moment of excitement, discovered that it was not a lover but a brother over whom she hung, he again met his blethering friend Webster—acquainted him with the history, and, in a few days, Joan Paraiso was arrested in his bed, and carried to Plymouth, to undergo his trial. The grief and horror of all may be easily conceived. All, save the origin of the evil, were thunderstruck and overpowered with grief and vexation. "But for your long tongue and empty head," said Johnston, taking him one day by the throat, "my dear Georgina had been mine—her brother had lived, and all had been well." The guilty man struggled, and was dashed against a stone wall, with tremendous violence. A concussion of the brain followed, and poor unhappy James Johnston was himself on trial for murder. It is true that he was acquitted, as the surgeon would not positively affirm that the dead person had not died from a natural stroke of apoplexy; and it is likewise true, that Joan Paraiso, *alias* George Gordon, was acquitted, as he had been compelled, from fear of death, to act as he had done. But Georgina was no longer an heiress, and the mercenary laird of Clatchet-Knowe, who had all but obtained her consent to a marriage, became suddenly cooled in his fervour. Johnston hearing of this, and having, after some months, recovered his spirits, made his addresses, and was accepted. Georgina Johnston is now, or was lately, a happy wife and mother. Her husband has purchased the farm of Kirkcudbright, in that neighbourhood, and they live in comfort and respectability. So much as a specimen of the achievements and fate of a bletherer. But who waits there?

"The Affected Idiot."

Let him enter. What a thing! But it is not with the tailor work that we have to deal; we leave that to the titter and ridicule of every sensible person in the company, and to the compassion of the rest.

> "In man or woman, but far most in man,
> I hate all affectation."

So says good-hearted Cowper. But, hating affectation, he must in some degree hate a large section of the male, and a still larger proportion of the female sex. In fact, we are all more or less affected—I, in writing this article in such an easy, off-hand, after-dinner manner, and the publisher of the Border Tales in affecting not to be affected by so many favourable notices in so many papers. I don't like the word—I hate it ever since Lord Brougham (who once was so great) made use of the one half of it, when speaking of Sugden; but, notwithstanding, I must out with it—"*humbug*" is the go, and everybody knows it, and yet everybody does it. Was there ever such a queer world, ma'am? I *wish*—well I will tell you, madam, what I wish—I wish I had a new tack of "this world," with all its nonsense. This thing we call "life," is to me exceeding amusing; but I am off, on the very velocipede of affectation, and must "'bout ship."

The affectation of no affectation is the most unsupportable of all. Simple Johnnie comes into the room, throwing about, from side to side, both his elbows. He immediately, in the simplicity of his nature, lets you know that he never was up to the ordinary methods of society; in testimony of which he sits down beside you on a sofa—plets his legs, and passes his hand along his leg, from heel to knee, and *vice versa*. You talk of anything and every-

thing. He is sure you are right. He never could remember anything. He is sure you are right; but he cannot say, it is so long since he read about it. He tells you at once that people call him "Simple Johnnie;" that he once tumbled into a river, whilst reading a book; that he is *so* absent, you have no notion; that he has forgotten his own name, and only remembered it, after having given a penny to a boy, saying—"Now, my boy, do you know who gave you that?" He puts on a blue stocking and a grey, and wonders that people observe it; he pushes through the market, snuffing, snorting, and repeating almost aloud, Thomson's Seasons; he is called a good sort of a body, and tells you so; but he knows in reality that he is an excellent classical scholar, and a writer of no mean degree. Affectation, however hangs over him, like a mist; and his real merits, which are great, are greatly obscured by the medium through which they are seen.

Let us change the sex!—A farmer's daughter maried to an Earl—no, not an Earl—a laird—a country gentleman. She is all *genteelity*—talks of nothing beneath Dukes and Marquises; asks you if there is anybody of note in India; never saw fish eaten without a silver fork; and considers that Queen Victoria has never seen good company! After a', wha cares? This is a precious rag of feminality; nobody can hurt her feelings, or destroy her equanimity. You mention, in her company, that Lady Louisa Russell, her most intimate friend, of whom she talks daily, and to everybody, hasleft the town without calling; she assumes an air of supreme indifference, and exclaims—"Well! after a', wha cares?"

A blue stocking!—No, I will not spend ink and paper on the subject—it is literally *thread*-bare—not a loop in the stocking but may be seen by a man of ninety without spectacles. A fop!—faugh!—who cares for anything of the dandy or exquisite species?—A braggadocio—another Munchausen! who kills trouts by the gross, and men by the dozen—who shoots on the wing—*e. g.* Two individuals of this description once met in my own presence. They had been in India, and were Indianizing for the benefit and entertainment of the company. Shooting came on the carpet, and their various achievements were stated. Colonel A—— had shot more than a dozen water-fowl at one shot.

"I am sure," said he, appealing to his Indian friend, "I am sure, General, you know it to be true."

"Twelve dozen, by God!" was the emphatic response.

"Who has not heard of my father, the Colonel?"—viz. Colonel Cloud—and yet this Colonel proved to be nothing more than plain Mr B——, from the grand town of Forfar. Oh, how shall I overtake the varied forms that rise up before me!—as well might I essay to catch and fix every butterfly from the Emperor of Morocco down to the blue wing. "Upwards and downwards, thwarting and convolved," the myriads of insects dance away their hour, and are forgot. And who art thou who thus speakest of others?—A solitary fly!—A large blue-bottom, madam, as insignificant and ephemeral as any amongst them. But, of this, enough. Let us now introduce another actor, or rather speaker.

"Well, sir, I am glad I have met you; for I was just going to call upon you, to tell you that my son, John, poor fellow—you know, John, that he has got a step—what they call a step in the service, and that he has had a severe fever, but is now quite well; and that he writes to his sister—such a letter—but I have it here, sir, in my pocket. Pray do, sir, sit down for a little, and I will read it to you; it is such a funny letter—you have no notion—and so full of inquiries for everybody, amongst the rest for yourself, whom it is wonderful that he remembers—he has such a memory, my Johnnie, and always had. I remember, when just a little thing not higher than this parasol—— But, bless me, sir, you are not listening!"

"No, ma'am, I beg your pardon, but I have an engagement." (Exit.)

And who does not see, at once, that this is a

"Prosing Idiot."

"I was up, yes—yes—up—up—yes, I was up by five yesterday—yes—yes—yesterday morning. When do you rise, ma'am?—I always rise—yes—yes—rise—I always rise by six—true—true—quite true—by six, ma'am—it is good—so good—yes—yes—very good, ma'am, for the health—the health—yes—the health."

Such is the drivel which we have often heard oozing, drop by drop, from a male creature of the prosy kind.

"The Blazing Idiot."

The blazing idiot is all over self and wonderment. He has done—what has he not done? He can do—what can he not do? One of this character was one day entertaining old Quin with the account of an encounter with a furious bull, in which the blazer had proved too much for the horner, and held him, in spite of his neck, till he roared for a truce.

"Oh," said Quin, looking around him knowingly on the company, "that is nothing at all to what I once experienced myself."

The original blazer looked amazement.

"Yes," says Quin, "I—even I—have managed the bull exercise in a higher style than you, sir. You only held the bull's head down by the horns, but I twisted his head from his neck, and threw it after his departing hind quarters!"

This procured a roar at the idiot's expense, and he shrunk out to announce his achievements somewhere else. Is he traveller? Why, then, Munchausen is a fool to him. He has undergone, achieved, seen, heard, tasted, more wonders than a thousand Gullivers.

"The bats of Madagascar are large, assuredly, and almost exclude the sunlight by the breadth of their hairy wings. But the bats are nothing, sir, to the bees."

"Why, what kind of bees have they?"

"Why, sir, the bees are, 'pon honour, sir, they are as large as your sheep in this country."

"Why, then, one would require to keep a pretty sharp look-out ahead, in case of a near encounter with such a winged monster."

"Not at all, sir. They make such a roaring noise, sir, with their wings, that you can hear them, like the bulls of Bashan, a full mile distant."

"Terrible! But are they numerous?"

"Oh, exceedingly."

"And what kind of flowers have they to feed on?"

"Why, just ordinary flowers. They cover them all over and insert their proboscis into a thousand, without stirring from their position."

"Yes. And what kind of skeps have they?"

"Oh, just ordinary skeps, like ours in this country."

"Yes. And how do these bees get into the skeps?"

"Oh, *just let them see to that!*"

But these may be termed the magnificent blazers. There is an animal of this species of very reduced dimensions; and yet, from its numbers and activity, it is not less provoking and annoying than the giant race. You cannot mention a long walk which you have taken; but it outwalks you by at least ten miles. You cannot drink your three bottles at a sitting; but it empties five. You made, whilst a boy, some hairbreadth escapes; but they are nothing to what it has escaped. You have had a very bad fever, and lay a whole week insensible; this creature roared a whole month. You have broken your tendon Achilles; this unfortunate has cut all the arteries and tendons of the leg. Go where you will, the land has

been travelled before you. Do what you may, the thing has been done, and much better done, already. In fact, you are only the copy of the original before you; a shaping out of a web; a degenerate branch of a vine in full growth; an Italian Alphabet in the presence of a Roman. "I thought my master a wise man; but this man makes my master a fool," says the housemaid in Dean Swift; and it is thus that the emmet Blazer befools you, turn where you may. Whom have we next in this our show-box of rarities? Step in, sir. Don't stumble on the door-way, like Protesilaus in setting out for Troy. Oh, I ask your pardon—

"The Blundering Idiot."

Sit down there, sir—no, not on that sofa—with your dirty garments, and shoes bemired; but on that arm-chair, where you may roll about to your heart's content. Now, sir, be silent; for I see you are about to blunder out whatever comes uppermost, (and that is generally froth and scum,) and listen to me. I am going to read you a lecture. It was owing to your blundering interference that I am not the Laird of Peatie's Mill at this moment. You went to my uncle's, and, by the way of recommending his nephew, told him that I was an intimate acquaintance of yours, and that you and I had many a happy night together at Johnnie Dowie's. Now, you ought to have known my uncle's views and habits—in short, his character—and that he had all his life long an utter abhorrence of anything approaching to dissipation. My uncle instituted inquiry, and found that what you stated was true, at least to a certain extent; and, in consequence, cut me off with a shilling, leaving Peatie's Mill to a miserly, mean fellow, who had once informed him of the approaching failure of one who owed him money. You need not make any apology now; the thing is done, and cannot be undone. When I was on the point of being married to an heiress, with a good person and a fine property, you came again as my evil genius, denying a report, which I had myself propagated, of my early indiscretions, and assuring her cousin that I was totally incapable of anything of the kind; that I was a perfect Nathaniel, or Joseph, or what not; and, in short, so disgusted the lady with your praises of me, that she immediately cut me, and married the master of a coasting vessel. I know what you are going to say; but I know, too, that you had no business to pop your nose into other people's business. Besides, at last election, did not you assure the member to whom you, amongst others, applied in my favour, that I was at heart a Tory, though I had assumed Whig colours of late; and all this because you knew his own father had been a violent Tory in old times. This so disgusted my patron that I lost the stamps by it. Your blundering idiocy, sir—without any bad motive to arm it to mischief—has done more injury to yourself, as well as to others, than would the very worst intentions and the most malevolent endeavours. But I spare you—convinced, as I am, that nothing which I can say will ever drain the blundering propensity out of your nature. But whom have we here?—

"A Born Idiot."

"Well, ma'am, let me have your own story from your own lips."

"Why, sir, do you use no more ceremony with me, knowing who I am, sir? When your ancestors, sir, were working on the Queen's highways, and breaking stones"——

"I beg your pardon, madam; but it is but a short time since Macadamizing was introduced, and my ancestors happened to live at a period prior to the breaking of stones on highroads as a business."

"Well, sir, but you have interrupted me, and I forgot what I was going to say. Oh ay! I was going to tell you that my ancestors rode in coaches, when yours drove carts: that mine spent thousands upon thousands, whilst yours were dealing in tarry-woo and candle grease; and yet you, sir—you now sit in this cottage of yours—(as you must needs call it)—you have the audacity, and the impertinence and the presumption, forsooth! to call my son to account for shooting a few of your dirty birds over your poor, paltry acres."

"Ma'am, I only warned him off my preserves, and did it in civil language too; but your son, taking his cue, I have no doubt, from so accomplished a parent, used improper and ungentlemanly language to me, and threatened to horsewhip me; so I thought it was only justice to myself to put him into the hands of my man of business."

"Your man of business, sir! And who gave you, or your father's son, a man of business, pray? What business may you have to manage, which a servant lass may not conduct to a favourable conclusion with a three-pronged grape?"

"Madam! I will stand this no longer. This house is my own. Depart!"

There she goes, wagging her tail and tossing her head the Born Idiot!

But here comes a change of person, in

"The Canting Idiot."

But, hush! I hear the voice of psalmody—she has taken to what she terms a "sweet psalm," and must not on any account be disturbed.

It is true that there are odd stories abroad of her early life, and some rather suspicious reports respecting a certain sergeant of a certain regiment. Suspicions, too, have been entertained of her being concerned in the burning of a certain will, by which her husband became possessed of property to a comfortable extent; but she has no family, and, of late years, has taken to religion, and, some say, occasionally to a less safe stimulant. Be that as it may, Mrs Glaiks is at the head of all manner of female associations of a religious character. She is a perfect adept in judging of young preachers and evangelical discourses. If she pronounce her verdict, the matter is settled; there is no appeal, not even to her poor henpecked husband, whose conscience, every now and then, requires all her care and eloquence to soothe. She has already taken possession of this world by a *trick*, and she means to take the next by *force*. She is urgent with the Lord, in season and out of season, and has been at great pains in converting a handsome young man, who was addicted to wine and its usual accompaniments. She says that she has been the unworthy instrument, in God's hand, of his soul's salvation; and meets with him more frequently in private than John Glaiks approves of. Pass on. Mrs Glaiks—

"If honest worth to heaven rise,
Ye'll mend ere ye come near it."

But what a mighty fuss is here! The door flies wide open, till the hinges crack again, as *in* there rolls, in all the majesty of a new suit of clothes, and a mighty self—

"The Pompous Idiot."

Reader! it is not Samuel Johnson, nor his Leader Bozzie. These were both pompous enough, God knows, but they were not idiots—it is "my uncle Thomas." My uncle Thomas was once a colonel in the Galloway Militia, and has long retired in single blessedness, to live upon a small family inheritance, which is scarcely sufficient to support himself, with a *man in livery* and a servant girl, to work his means, and act as chambermaid. My uncle rises every morning at seven—rings his bell—and calls his servant to shave and dress him. All this is done in solemn silence, for it would be presumption in John to utter a word unless he be spoken to. My uncle having surveyed his full round

From that day he never lifted another stone, but always exhibited the greatest liking for this child—of which the following anecdote is sufficient proof. A little boy was playing in the channel of a mountain torrent, then almost dry. There was thunder in the distance, and Queensberry had put on her inky robe of darkness. All at once, the burns began to emit a loud, roaring, rattling sound, and down came the Caple Water—as my informant, who witnessed the scene, said—like "corn sacks." The boy, owing to his eagerness in pursuing a trout (which he was endeavouring to catch) from stone to stone, did not hear or see the approaching danger, till the mighty flood was upon him. My informant—a shepherd—threw aside plaid and staff, and ran to the rescue; but the red and roaring flood was before him; and a fine boy of seven or eight years old would undoubtedly have lost his life, had it not been for the poor maniac, who chanced to be pulling rushes hard by. He rushed into the flood just as it was oversetting the helpless victim, and, with a tremendous jerk, threw him clear upon the green bank of the torrent. He then endeavoured himself to clear the bank; but the treacherous and hollow earth, under the pressure of the water, gave way, and down tumbled brow and man into the raging whirlpool—the man underneath, the brow above him. The boy, by means of his heels, escaped; but poor Will Gibson's body was next day found some miles lower down, sadly disfigured and mangled. Thus did this grateful maniac expiate the inadvertent injury which he had done this very boy when a mere child, by saving his life at the expense of his own.

We now pass, in prosecution of our history, from darkness into light, from the irresponsible and irrational agent, to the responsible and foolish. Our guide here, in this *mare magnum* of idiocy, shall be *the use* of language in discussing the various merits of the different classes. We shall make use of no new phraseology, but be guided to our purpose by the acknowledged and recognised use and meaning of terms. Why the word "idiot" is retained in conversational language in particular, when its original and more legitimate meaning is lost, we have already pointed at; it is owing to analogy and resemblance that in this case, as in many others, such terms are legitimate and expressive.

There is, then, in the first place, to come at once to the point—there is

"The Havering Idiot."

Horace gives a most correct idea of this class in these well-known lines:—

> "Hunc neque dira venena, nec hosticus auferet ensis
> Nec laterum dolor, aut tussis aut tarda podagra,
> *Garrulus hunc quando consumet.*" . . .

Galt, too, has hit off the character, under a feminine aspect, in his "Wearifu' Woman;" but we have no occasion to ask Horace for his spectacles, or Galt for his microscope, in order to discover the features of this most numerous and annoying class. Midges, in a new-mown meadow, are terribly teasing; so are peas in one's shoes—particularly if unboiled. There is a certain cutaneous disease which is said to give exercise at once to the nails and to patience. Who would not fret if placed naked, all face over, in a whin bush? To be teased and tormented with grammar rules is vastly provoking; and to get the proof questions by heart cannot be deemed anything but annoying. A showery day, when you have set out on a long-meditated "pic-nic," will vex the most patient soul into spleen; and marriage-settlements are frequently great sources of heartburnings and delays. To be told that your house is on fire, when your messenger is on his way to effect an insurance, may possibly give pain; and to find that every pipe is frozen, so that there is not a drop of water for the engine, may probably add to your chagrin. All these, and a thousand other miseries to which human flesh is heir, may, nay, must be borne; but the torment of coming into ear-shot of a "havering idiot," is a thousand and a thousand times more insupportable. You are placed beside him at table, and in a mixed company of men of literature and science, whom probably you may never see again. A subject is started, which, from peculiar reasons, happens to be not only of itself curious, but exceedingly interesting to you, professionally in particular. Professor Pillans is discussing education, or Combe is manipulating heads; Sir David Brewster is describing the polarization of light, or Tom Campbell is thrilling every heart with poetic quotations;—no matter, you are unfortunately in juxtaposition to a "havering idiot," and about five removes from the focus of general conversation. He will not let you rest for a moment, but is ever whispering into your ear some grand thing which he said last evening at Lady Whirligig's ball. You push your dish forward, and fix your eyes upon the intelligent speaker. He observes, and mistakes, or seems to mistake, your movement and your motive, and immediately hopes he may help you to the dish you are after. You are fairly *dished;* and unless you knock him down with your fist in the first place, and shoot him afterwards, you have no resource but to repeat the lines of Horace, already quoted, and submit to your fate.

His stories are infinite and inextricable; but, unlike the epic, they have neither a beginning, a middle, nor an end. When he starts with "I'll tell you a good thing," you listen for an instant, but immediately perceive that you are on the wrong scent; and, as he advances, he is ever admonishing you with his elbow of the many *hits* he is making; and having heard him out—if that be possible!—you immediately exclaim, "Well!" thinking assuredly the cream of the joke is yet awaiting you.

But, sir, you are making no meal at all. You must try some of that fine honeycomb; it is most excellent; it is of our own making; for, I may say, we have almost everything within ourselves. The bees, last season, did not do well at all; but they have done better this, sir. You are a natural philosopher, sir—can you tell me how the bees see their way back again to their houses, when they go far away in search of flowers and honey?"

"Just the way, I suppose, ma'am, that they see their way a-field."

"Oh, ay—I ken that; but I hae a book here—(go away, Jeannie, and bring me the book on natural history; the Cyclopædia, ye ken.) Now, sir, this book tells me that, from the shape of their eye, the bees canna see an inch before them—how then do they travel miles and miles, and never lose their road?—but bless me, sir, you're no making a meal at no rate. Ay, here's 'the article,' as it is called. Read that, sir, just at the bottom of the 196 page," &c. &c.

"The Blethering Idiot"

is manifestly twin-brother to the haverer, with this small difference, however, that the bletherer is a mere repeater or reporter of havers. The one is the importer, as it were, of the article, wholesale, and the other retails the article thus imported. They are raw commodity, and manufactured goods—they are original and copy—cause and effect. Burns was quite aware of this when he wrote—

> "And baith a yellow George to claim,
> And thole their blethers."

These blethers were not original inventions, but merely varnished repetitions. The blethering idiot is most dangerous as well as most disagreeable. In this respect, he even surpasses the haverer, whose annoyances terminate in themselves in the irritations and inconveniences of the moment. But the bletherer is a dangerous friend, an inveterate foe, and a most unsafe neighbour. Will Webster was the intimate friend of poor James Johnston. James

was a lad of honest intentions, fair talents, and warm feelings. He was educated as an engineer, and had already acquired a certain status and character in that capacity. His friend Webster had been accidentally a school companion from the proximity of their dwellings, and the intimacy of their parents. Webster had studied law, and was about to pass advocate, when he came to meet his friend, and spend a harvest vacation with him at Castledykes, in the parish of Tynron, Dumfriesshire. The two young men were in the bloom and strength of youth, being both some months under twenty-one. Georgina Gordon was the daughter of a small neighbouring proprietor, (a Dunscore laird,) an only daughter, her father's prop, (her mother having died at her birth,) and the admiration of everybody who merely saw her at church on Sunday, or who knew her intimately. I should have mentioned before that this beautiful flower had been named Georgina with the view of perpetuating the name of a brother whose fate had been involved in obscurity. He had betaken himself early to sea, and the vessel in which he sailed had never more, during several years before Georgina's birth, been heard of. All possible inquiries had been made, but without effect. The Thunderer, Captain Morris, had been seen off the coast of South America; but no more was known. James Johnston was already in the way of making reasonable proposals to any one; but his heart had long been fixed at Castledykes. He used to wander for hours and days along the glen of the cairn, and within sight of the old family abode. Georgina, however, had already many lovers, and was reported to have, in fact, made a selection. It was again and again reported by Will Webster to his friend Johnston, and to everybody who took any interest in the report, that he had seen Georgina enter the Kelpie Cave in company with a lover, and that he had even seen them fondly embracing each other. At first, Johnston gave no heed to Will's *blethers*; but still they gradually made an impression upon him. He became, at last, decidedly jealous, when, led and guided by his friend Will, he beheld, with his own eyes, a male figure closely wrapped up in a plaid holding secret converse with the lovely Miss Gordon. What will not jealousy, goaded on by officious and injudicious friendship, do? Unknown to any one, Will met and accosted the figure in the dark—a struggle and a contest with lethal weapons took place, and the stranger fell. No sooner had the deed been done than James saw and repented of his rashness. The wound which he had inflicted was bound up; and the fainting man, help being procured, conveyed to Castledykes. James Johnston was not the man to fly, even should death prove the consequence of his rashness. A curious denouement now took place—the person whom James had wounded was no other than the long lost George Gordon. The vessel in which he had sailed had not been wrecked, as was supposed, but had been taken, skuttled, and sunk by Spanish privateers, who then infested the Leeward Islands. He had been bound and fettered in the hold, till he came under a solemn promise neither to desert nor abandon his colours in the hour of battle. Under such discipline, it was no wonder that, in a few years, George Gordon (now taking the Spanish name of Joan Paraiso) should be habituated to all manner of rapine and bloodshed. From less to more, by acts of heroism, he became second, and, ultimately, first in command of a Spanish privateer.

England having viewed this growing evil with a suitable indignation, sent out her armaments to the west; and the Don Savallo, Joan Paraiso, commander, was taken. The prisoners were conveyed to Britain; and it being discovered that Paraiso was originally a British subject, he was thrown into prison to abide his trial. From this he escaped, almost by a miracle, and wandering over the kingdom in another domino, or assumed name, he came at last, as if by the law of force and attraction, to his native glen. But he durst not yet discover himself, for he was an outlaw, and the papers were filled with rewards for his apprehension. In this situation he discovered himself, under the most dreadful oaths of secrecy, even from his own father, (at least for a time,) to his sister. The rest, up to the period of his wound, which was by no means dangerous, is easily understood. What follows will be necessary to complete the narrative:—James Johnston having learned all this from Georgina, who, in a moment of excitement, discovered that it was not a lover but a brother over whom she hung, he again met his blethering friend Webster—acquainted him with the history, and, in a few days, Joan Paraiso was arrested in his bed, and carried to Plymouth, to undergo his trial. The grief and horror of all may be easily conceived. All, save the origin of the evil, were thunderstruck and overpowered with grief and vexation. "But for your long tongue and empty head," said Johnston, taking him one day by the throat, "my dear Georgina had been mine—her brother had lived, and all had been well." The guilty man struggled, and was dashed against a stone wall, with tremendous violence. A concussion of the brain followed, and poor unhappy James Johnston was himself on trial for murder. It is true that he was acquitted, as the surgeon would not positively affirm that the dead person had not died from a natural stroke of apoplexy; and it is likewise true, that Joan Paraiso, *alias* George Gordon, was acquitted, as he had been compelled, from fear of death, to act as he had done. But Georgina was no longer an heiress, and the mercenary laird of Clatchet-Knowe, who had all but obtained her consent to a marriage, became suddenly cooled in his fervour. Johnston hearing of this, and having, after some months, recovered his spirits, made his addresses, and was accepted. Georgina Johnston is now, or was lately, a happy wife and mother. Her husband has purchased the farm of Kirkcudbright, in that neighbourhood, and they live in comfort and respectability. So much as a specimen of the achievements and fate of a bletherer. But who waits there?

"The Affected Idiot."

Let him enter. What a thing! But it is not with the tailor work that we have to deal; we leave that to the titter and ridicule of every sensible person in the company, and to the compassion of the rest.

> "In man or woman, but far most in man,
> I hate all affectation."

So says good-hearted Cowper. But, hating affectation, he must in some degree hate a large section of the male, and a still larger proportion of the female sex. In fact, we are all more or less affected—I, in writing this article in such an easy, off-hand, after-dinner manner, and the publisher of the Border Tales in affecting not to be affected by so many favourable notices in so many papers. I don't like the word—I hate it ever since Lord Brougham (who once was so great) made use of the one half of it, when speaking of Sugden; but, notwithstanding, I must out with it—"*humbug*" is the go, and everybody knows it, and yet everybody does it. Was there ever such a queer world, ma'am? I *wish*—well I will tell you, madam, what I wish—I wish I had a new tack of "this world," with all its nonsense. This thing we call "life," is to me exceeding amusing; but I am off, on the very velocipede of affectation, and must "'bout ship."

The affectation of no affectation is the most unsupportable of all. Simple Johnnie comes into the room, throwing about, from side to side, both his elbows. He immediately, in the simplicity of his nature, lets you know that he never was up to the ordinary methods of society; in testimony of which he sits down beside you on a sofa—plets his legs, and passes his hand along his leg, from heel to knee, and *vice versa*. You talk of anything and every-

in the dark, and slapped him suddenly on the back betwixt the shoulders. The person suddenly struck, jumped up on the deck, and shouting, "Shot at last, by God!" he died on the spot.

Jeanie Gibson and William Laidlaw were lovers, not in any particular sentimental manner, but just in the old-fashioned way. They liked each other's company, sat very close to each other in the dark, and occasionally indulged in an innocent kiss! But Jeanie was what is called "bonny," and had more lovers than Willie Laidlaw; one of whom, Bob Paton, a sly, unfeeling rogue, of the practical-jesting kind, was over head-and-ears in love with bonny Jeannie. He took it into his head that he would play a trick upon Jeanie, and make her avow at once her preference for Willie Laidlaw, whom she only in secret favoured. For this purpose he dressed up a figure in what (in the dark) might appear to be the clothes of Willie Laidlaw, and placed it in a field through which he knew Laidlaw was to pass. He armed himself with a gun, duly charged with powder and shot. Firm prepared, he advanced into the field or park, well knowing that Jeanie Gibson was not only within *sight*, but within *hearing* of him, being seated under the cover of a stone dyke hard by.

"Where are you going, William?" said the practical jester. "I know where you are going; you are going to meet wi' Jeannie Gibson; but I'll blaw your brains out first." Thus saying, he fired off his musket, and the figure immediately fell.

A wild scream was all that was heard, and Jeanie was found lifeless: no, much worse—deprived of reason for life! She never recovered; but when her lover was brought into her presence, always said—

"I know—I know it is not my Willie. I saw—I saw him fa'! It isna him; it canna be him. He's awa—awa—awa!" And then she uniformly fainted.

Nor did the practical jester escape. Willie actually shot him, and was hanged on Lockerby Muir for the deed.

Finis coronat opus—to conclude, I shall e'en take off myself under the character of

"The Scribbling Idiot."

He is always meditating something great, but never carries it into execution. One day he commences a heroic poem, which terminates the next in a rebus or sonnet. One day he becomes a dramatist, and pens a scene of a play on the escape of James the Fifth from the palace of Falkland; the next he writes an article for the "Tales of the Borders." Now he undertakes a history of the eight-and-twenty years' persecution—gets out numerous books from the library—actually writes a preface and a conclusion in fine style, which ends in a few lines in the poet's corner of a county newspaper. He sketches a poem, to be entitled, "Gratitude"—in which dogs, elephants, lions, and even horses, as well as men and women, are to figure; but he never gets on further than four very indifferent lines. He is sixty years old; and at sixteen would write as well and cleverly as he does now. He never takes time to correct *vetere stylum*, he is always in such a confounded hurry lest his idea should escape him ere he has given it a black coat and a white waistcoat. Nobody can equal him in rapidity of composition; but, then, his composition is like the man's horse, with two faults—"it is very ill to catch, and not worth a penny when caught." He does everything for everybody; writes all manner of reviews of books which he has never read, and quotes authorities which he has never consulted. He gets daily into scrapes by making use of people's names about whom he knows nothing, and who abhor, or pretend to abhor, notoriety One day he is all devotion and sentiment, the next all fun and frolic. He spends his life in an endless whirl of fancies, meditations, resolves, attempts, and finds himself every hour less respected; and, indeed, less respectable than he once was. The worst of it is, "he knows that he is an idiot;" but the knowledge does him no manner of good. He takes a tumbler or two; and then he is, in his own estimation, the very acme of genius! He knows that, had he possessed perseverance, he might have done much; and this knowledge, instead of stimulating, paralyzes all manner of effect. His life is a dream; and when he dies, he will be instantly forgotten. He will set like an equitorial sun, and there will be no twilight over his memory.

But "*latet dolus in generalibus*"—I set out in life with excellent prospects—had gained the patronage of a nobleman who had, at least, twenty kirks in his gift. In these days the Veto had not shewn its appalling phiz! I had the absolute promise of a kirk which was sure to be vacant in a year or two. But nothing would serve me but I would write some satirical verses on a scolding wife, whom I knew only by report. I sent the following lines to some Magazine o the day:—

Tune.—"*Roy's Wife of Aldivalloch.*"

"Tam's wife o' Puddentuscal*—
Tam's wife o' Puddentuscal,
Wat ye how she rated me,
And ca'ed me baith a loon and rascal.

"Her words gaed through me like a sword—
She said she'd gnash our heads together.
Had I sic wife, upon my word,
I'd twist her chanter in a tether.
Tam's wife, &c.

"I did but pree her dinner cheer,
And hadna drunk twa jugs o' toddy,
When *in* she banged like ony bear—
Oh, she is an awsome body!
Tam's wife, &c.

"I took my bonnet, and the road,
And to my waefu fate resigned me;
When, what think ye, the raging jade
Daddit *to* the door behind me?
Tam's wife o' Puddentuscal—
Tam's wife o' Puddentuscal,
Wat ye how she rated me,
And ca'ed me baith a loon and rascal."

Now this song happened to take in the neighbourhood, and was reckoned severe and clever. The murder came out in a few weeks. I received the following letter from Lord C——:

"Sir,—I hear you have been lampooning, in a periodical work, a person in whom Lady C—— takes a deep interest. I consider myself relieved from any obligations which your past services may have imposed upon me.—I remain, &c."

My Lord was as good as his word, and that I am now
"Within my noisy mansion skilled to rule,"
instead of appearing sleek, fat, and comfortable at the General Assembly now sitting, is owing to my scribbling propensities.

But there is yet one other idiot with whose character I might close this "strange, eventful history"—an idiot decidedly the most prominent of all—an idiot who, in modern times in particular, has proved his claims on my notice to an unusual extent—an idiot, too, without whose idiocy mine were literally a dead letter—Reader! gentle reader!—"*Quid rides—nomine mutato de* te."

* Name of a farm.

MARRIED AND UNMARRIED.

Come—my blood-red comforter—good wine—I have fretted over this interminable source of misery too long; like the black rod of Agrippa, it is possessed of the power of calling up legions of devils in my bosom, who torture me with the "soft tongue that breaketh bones"—by whispering into the auricles of my withered heart, the fact, (I can scarcely write it,) that I, who have devoted every moment of a life of seventy years (for my very childhood was a period of worldly wisdom) to making mankind my puppets—to preying upon their ignorance, their pride, their philanthropy, their noble stoical resolutions, their virtues—whereby I have become rich, have at last been outwitted—fooled, cheated, and laughed at—by a woman—a creature who has been represented as being without a soul. Is my misery to continue to the end of my life? or shall I not, for one night—by the aid of some of that care-killing nectar I had reserved for my marriage—wring a smile from my tormentors; and prove that, as the oaths of women were said to have been written in wine, so shall the miseries they inflict be for one merry hour washed out by it. Let it be so—my heart that has so long known that joy of gold which, reversing the law of all pleasant emotions, makes the organ shrink and shrivel, shall swell and open for once, by the touch of the *vine-caduceus*. One bottle, and then another, till I see the vulture faces of the harpies of disappointed cunning, look pleasant—though it be the smile of the Sicilian virgins, I care not. Come then, I feel already the greatest triumph of the rosy god, when his laurels are withered cipress leaves, and his laugh is an echo of the satyr's—my pen has felt his power, and shrivelled avarice has become eloquent of its triumphs, and disdainful of one last defeat. I can now smile at the pains of my father, who laboured to instil into me a love of the writings of the stoics, who he said had done more for the honour and benefit of man, than all the classical poets that ever drank of the waters of Hippocrene. But I can distinguish—that smile is not now produced by the wine. Before I was fourteen years of age, I laughed inwardly as I heard him applaud the noble self-denial of these old patrons of exsiccated virtue; and I think I see myself leering in his face as I put to him, slyly, the question—"but did not these men despise gold, go almost naked, and live on herbs?" The good man thought I wanted knowledge, and imparted it to me—little knowing that Mammon, an earlier tutor, had been already busy with my heart, and that, what he took for the smile of conscious ignorance, was the satirical enunciation of nature, who had predestined me to make the fools that luxuriate on the generous sentiments of liberality and contempt of money the creatures of my future prey. A painter would have a fine study in this eye of mine, lighted up as it is at this moment with wine, and joyous with the laugh of satirical triumph, as I think how much the wise men of the world—those who look on money as the soul and source of all good—have been benefited by the stoical philosophy of the ancients, cooked up, as it has been, in the form of what now goes by the names of generosity, liberality, nobility of sentiment, and open-heartedness. The world would have been a desert to such men as I, if there had been no virtue extant.

As my mind wanders back to these early times, when I first felt the impulses of "Scotch prudence," I feel my diaphragm again convulsed by the reminiscence, that my father intended me for the church. Even then, I was conscious of the ludicrous bizarrerie of the conceit; and my knowledge of the ancients suggested to me the fable of the gold which Cepio, with sacrilegious hands, took from the Gallican church, the very touch of which produced death to those who laid hold of it with wordly-wise fingers. With a heart that yearned for gold in chalders and bushels, I figured myself pursuing a process of augmentation of stipend, and fighting for the twentieth chalder of barley. I relished the light of the contrast—the pea of grain and the golden guinea had a strange juxtaposition in my mind, that tickled my fancy, and produced a smile which my father could not read while he answered my question as to the amount of a clergyman's income. All that is before me now—and I need not say I enjoy it—as I continue to trace the gradual evolution of the principle of Scotch prudence, which, long before my mercantile apprenticeship was finished, had grown into an entire system of worldly wisdom, transcending, in beauty and uniformity, anything to be found in the books of Solomon, or the golden verses of Pythagoras. I hold it to be a true test of the truth of the theory of getting rich, that it looks as well through the medium of wine as through the frozen halo of philosophical induction. Every axiom of it seems to be possessed of mathematical proportions—to have length, breadth, and thickness—to be tangible and ponderable—to fill the hollow of the hand, the gulf of the mind, and the void of the heart. Altogether, it is a grand subject, involving as extended and perfect a knowledge of mankind as the disciplined jockey acquires of the quadrupeds which he makes the subjects of commerce and gain, and which he never thinks he thoroughly knows till he has submitted them to equitation—in plainer terms, till he has ridden them.

It is almost needless for such a man as I have described myself to be, to say that I got rich; but, looking to the ignorance of some people on the subject, it may savour of information to tell them that it was almost impossible that I should *not* have got rich. Thought, in the extensive form of meditation, and the capability of acting on the result of the study, are the true magic of all success. The small and insignificant adjuncts of a contempt of the ordinary prejudices, virtues, or feelings of mankind; the determination to twist them to your purposes; the evident resource of cunning, comprehending the device of *looking* humility, simplicity, and ignorance, to bring your victim *out;* the stratagem of speaking inversely, as you think; the resolution to be wary of generous impulses, and the habit of pausing whenever you descry anything in the shape of a feeling lurking in any corner of the heart—all elements of Scotch prudence are too evident to require notice, and, indeed, generally rise of their own accord, as attendant spirits of the great ruling genius of the inborn love of gold. These are not confessions elicited by the wine I have drank—where there is no ground for shame, there is nothing to confess; the ideas are the mere *staple*

of life; and if there be anything like a confession about the whole affair, it is that the wine—*in vino veritas*—may have removed the prudence which has hitherto led me to conceal what it would have been impolitic to own.

By this system of eternal thinking, scheming, pondering, and pausing, I became as rich as Crœsus long before I attained the age of fifty years, by which time my Scotch prudence had become so much a matter of habit, that I never was at the pains to look for, among mankind, any specimen of the species other than fools or rogues; the former of whom I loved and despised, because they were my prey, and the latter I hated, because they attempted to foil me by my own weapons. At this period of my life, a new feeling began to work within me—a desire to be petted, praised, and beloved. My immense riches fed my vanity—the world appeared to me as a thing formed for myself, and the creatures in it for no other use than to contribute to my pleasure. I got young men to praise me for a bottle of wine or so; and I took their praises, while I despised the adulators; but, above all, I became fond of the adulation of women, who always appeared to me to be better up to the art than men—gliding more easily into my humours; covering their flatteries with an appearance of incipient affection; bantering me on my immense wealth, that ought to be shared by a sweet consort; and laying before me, with that delightful naïveté of which they are all mistresses, the enjoyments of wedded love, which, with the baggages themselves, (such is their art,) were all at my supreme nod. I loved this flattery too much to take any trouble to ascertain whether or not it was true; but, there was one idea that contained a sharp truth, the point of which even this wine I am sipping can scarcely turn: when young and poor, the women would not look at me; and, as years do not add to the beauty of the countenance, there arose a species of deductive conclusion that did not augur very well for my vanity; that, in fact, I was ugly; but I had fenced too dexterously in the mercantile world not to be able to parry the deduction to the extent, at least, of saving me the pain of hurt pride; while the fair creatures themselves wrought so assiduously, in unison with my own conceit, that I soon arrived at the belief that I possessed the power of making a wife happy. Wo to that conclusion—another bumper to quell the demon—down—down!

This love of the praise and adulation of women was followed by a pungent feeling of uxoriousness; and, the moment I felt the sneaking impulse, I put myself, according to the custom I had followed in my mercantile diplomacy, upon my guard. I became jealous and suspicious of my heart, lest the deceitful organ might hurry me into a bad bargain; and, the moment I got my back fairly rested on my old support of prudential meditation, I felt myself safe. Though fifty years of age, I had plenty of time—and was determined to use it too, to study—to pause, to ponder, to analyze every form, face, indication, connection—each and all the qualities and circumstances of the fair objects who possessed any likelihood of suiting my humours. My study of mankind, and my habits of mercantile diplomacy, that had led me to divide the world into the two great classes of fools and rogues, were applied to that sex which I was now about to turn to my advantage; and, while in them I could see no third class, any more than in the men, I was contented to have a simpleton as my slave, rather than a rogue as my superior and castigator. It was a fearful subject; yet I, who had mastered man, and wrung a fortune out of his weaknesses, could not fail, by the dexterous use of my old instruments of cunning and adroitness, to turn the weaker sex to my purposes, and extract my pleasures from them without endangering my wealth or my peace—the only two things in the world of any importance.

These dreadful marriage laws increased my caution; and not having studied them with the minuteness that I had observed in buying and selling, I set about making myself master of their endless and dangerous subtleties. Upon looking back on the laws and usages of nations which have been reputed great and wise, we find many traces of a Malthusian principle having pervaded their legislation and manners, as if they viewed the birth of man as a boon to the earth or to his fellows, incapable of being too much multiplied, and certain, in all cases, of bringing good to the State. Among the Romans, we see, in early and active operation, an edict, whereby the fathers of children to the amount of six were exempted from public burdens; and those who had been often subjected to the matrimonial chain were crowned with laurels. They deemed it better to adopt the "soothing system" with the incorrigible beings termed bachelors, than to follow the Greeks, among whom the Spartans—those sturdy disciplinarians—were eminent for endeavouring to *compel* their citizens to enter into the holy state of matrimony, by instituting a festival, during which every Spartan wife and maiden had the privilege of flogging, as unmercifully as they chose, the lazy or cunning celibates who refused to benefit the state by becoming husbands and fathers. Nor was this system of encouraging marriage confined to the ancients, for it is not a couple of hundred years since the King of France, acting probably on the words of St Augustin—"Marriage is the solace of humanity"—imitated the Romans by offering a reward to those who would bear the chain. There is only one instance, so far as I know, of a law repressing or obstructing this generally desired object of legislators; and that, as is generally known, was the famous Papian edict which, being directed against the marriages of sexagenarians who were reckoned too old for forming spruce bridegrooms, could scarcely be said to be an exception from the general rule and spirit of multiplication of these legislators.

The introduction of the Christian religion, with its anti-matrimonial sanctions, was against these views; but the Christian fathers, St Pierre, and the others, with the exception of St Jerome, who praised celibacy so highly that his friends suppressed his book *De Virginitate*, disregarding Paul, were loud in praise of marriage, which was enrolled among the Popish sacraments. Kings who wanted subjects favoured the fathers of the church; and Charles Chausse, who contrived, by publishing his book in favour of single blessedness, and getting it answered by Sieur Ferrand, to raise a paper war on the subject, was set down as a dry-boned churl, who knew nothing of what was good for mortal man in this state of sin. The eternal wars of these early chivalrous ages, by swallowing up, like the Hydra of Lerna, as many men as could be produced from all the human nurseries of the world, created a convenient necessity for kings inculcating the views of the holy fathers; and the nations of Europe, and Great Britain in particular, saw plainly that, unless they patronized Hymen, they would soon be depopulated by Death, who did not seem to care a whit whether men and women married or remained single. Such I take to have been the causes that led to the extreme facility of accomplishing marriage, (by mere consent,) which, throughout the whole of our kingdom, up to 1757, and still in Scotland, has made our country either a paradise or a Gehenna.

This was well-contrived on the part of rulers, who wanted subjects for the war-market; but, with the cunning of Dædalus, they made the labyrinth as open in its access doors as the Greek net, called *Gangamon*, was in its meshes; and the poor votaries of Hymen found that, while nothing was more easy than to get into his temple, nothing on earth could be more difficult than to get out again. The fane was indeed a labyrinth; but instead of finding there

the kindly *thread* of the maker that led outwards, they found only chains that bound them for ever. No one, though gifted with a tongue like the Dodonean bell, could tell how many love-sick victims have entered into that royal trap, and pined away their miserable lives, deprived for ever of the sun of liberty. But it may be said, and it has been said, that the wary public have long since seen the indissoluble running knot; and that the difficulty of getting out has produced a salutary cunning, which prevents thousands from marrying, who would otherwise willingly enter into and take trial of the lauded yet perilous condition. The truth of this position must at once be conceded; but the philanthropist who offers it, may find that there is a resilient spring on it that sends it back to him with a force greater than that which he imparted to it; for, unfortunately, it is only the old fox that escapes—*annosa vulpes haud capitur laqueo*—while the young and inexperienced one finds himself in the toils: the strippling marries and produces a host of beggars, and he who has had the art to get rich and learned to be wise, flies the snare the moment he has discovered its perils.

This difficulty, nay impossibility, of dissolving the easy-bound tie, our legislators pretend to found upon some insulated passages in holy writ—despising the law of the Romans, who, looking upon marriage as an ordinary contract, allowed divorces on the ground of old age, want of health, upon joint agreement, or on intimation that one of the couple wanted liberty; and truly, if the sages had adhered out and out to the passages of Matthew and Mark, that allow only one cause of divorce, and not flown away for a pretended foundation for an eternal separation, on the ground of wilful desertion, to the seventh chapter of the First Corinthians, they might at least have been considered consistent. But, seeing that there is no authority in holy writ for a divorce on the ground of desertion, I could see no reason why (at least where there are no children) they might not have fallen upon some expedient to allow us to free ourselves from spendthrifts, drunkards, and criminals, with whom it may have been our misfortune and misery to have been united. I trembled to think that the woman who ruins her husband must remain his wife; that she who, abandoned to habits of intemperance, is spurned by society and cast from their houses, can force her way into her husband's home; that she who may attempt to murder her husband, is still his wife, and has a right to her terce and relict's portion; that she who brings herself to the gallows, must swing off it his consort, and leave, at the end of the rope, a right to the king or her kindred to claim a half of his property, and the honour of his connections.

But such I found was the law; and, though I had turned mankind to my own purposes, I found that the statutes of the kingdom were rather too much for me; and the only resource left, was to increase, if possible, my caution, and study, more circumspectly than I had ever done in an ordinary money bargain, the living commodity I was about to purchase. I was already well prepared—had tested the truth of all the old and the new adages—I forgot not the line of Homer, nor the old tripartite evil of "fire, water, woman," of the last of which the merry Lacon said he had chosen the least when he married a wife of small stature. Believing every word of the woman-hating Simonides' poetical tirade, I found, in the maxims of the modern world, and my own experience, a confirmation of all that had ever been said against the sex since the days of Dejanira, who was the death of Hercules; but, such had been my success in overcoming all the difficulties presented to me by the men whom I rendered subservient to my views of money-making, that I felt my pride of ambidextrous management and manœuvring rise higher and higher as the perils of marriage rose in strong and stronger array against me; and the faith, besides, which I had in my powers of pleasing and enchantment, gave me a confidence that made me buckle with more alacrity for the onset. I had no fear of making a wife love me, for I was absolute master of all the blandishments and sweet palpations of fond lovers, and I had a thorough knowledge of the truth of the old saying that there are three things in especial that are the better for flogging—women, walnut trees, and spaniels. Neither did I fear much the monster intemperance, so long as I could keep the key of my wine cellar; and though the remedy for extravagance—an inhibition published to the world—was one against contracting debt in my name, that some husbands have an affected distaste to, I looked to it as the grand *palladium* of a husband's security, and even secretly chuckled over the recondite knowledge of marriage-law, that enabled me thus to protect myself against the schemes of the sex. In addition to all these safe-guards, I was perfectly master of the secret virtue and power of a marriage-contract, whereby, if she died before me, I could keep every penny of the goods in communion, including, of course, her tocher, and be therefore a gainer by the speculation of marriage, as I had been by many an archly-contrived scheme of mercantile policy. To sum up the whole—my knowledge of human nature, my power of penetration, my care, caution, investigation, espionage, and tact, would enable me to make a good choice; and thus, in spite of these hated laws of indissoluble bondage, I might contrive to make the perilous enterprise as productive of pleasure and profit as any scheme in which I had as yet ever engaged.

Hitherto, my intercourse with the fair sex had been limited to a species of playful badinage, of which my vanity on the one side; and my money, and perhaps my personal attractions (the reasons I have had to think myself ugly I have always scorned) on the other, formed the inspiring causes. While they saw me smiling in the sunshine of their adulation, they might, if they had known human nature as well as I did, have observed in my grey twinkling eye a clear indication of a consciousness that they wanted to hook me; but they never saw it, and the adulation in which I luxuriated continued. Now, however, that I had resolved to make one of them my slave for life, I looked upon all this in a very different light. It was no longer the fair creature that praised me most, that I studied or loved the most; by one swoop I cast off no fewer than four of those who, for a long period, had been flattering me with the most extravagant compliments, and casting over me the glamour of their bewitching blandishments. My reason for this determined and wholesale measure was, that I required no further evidence against them than that they wanted to draw me into their toils; for, of nothing on earth have I ever had a greater horror than the least indication, on the part of a dealer, (and women were not excluded,) of a wish to benefit himself, when I myself had any object to gratify at his expense. This determined *coup-de-main* produced me a great host of enemies. I learned, from that sneaking espionage of which I am so exquisite a master, that they called me an old dry hunks, who, without any intention of marrying, got women to praise me, and then turned them off to make way for new adulators. This rather increased my vanity, and properly too, because, abuse is, in most cases, the child of disappointment; which again was nothing but the counterpart of my triumph over selfishness.

I now commenced seriously my system of inquiry, seldom entering a family without being well prepared by a thorough knowledge of the state of their finances, the character of the mother, the dispositions and appearances of the daughters, the number of poor relations they had, the probability of the father becoming a hanger-on for money, or the mother a director where she had no right to interfere·

and, in short, everything I could learn, from whatever source, however humble, though at second-hand from the kitchen itself. My personal investigations, after I had secured an introduction, were not less searching and cautious; and, assuredly, I required it all, where the fame and enchantment of my immense wealth procured me favour, lighted up eyes, and modulated sweet tones to an extent that made it next to impossible (to any man but myself) to distinguish between what was due or conceded to my personal and mental attractions, and what to my fortune. In Mr Warden's family I thought I had found a pretty fair object, at least for studying, and for a whole year had been watching their actions, and testing the heart of the youngest daughter, Sophia, when I ascertained, from my own servant, who I always made it a point to get introduced to the servants of those I visited, that the mother was often in the habit of accusing the young lady of extravagance. I saw the sword over me, hanging by a hair, and immediately ceased my visits; whereupon a hue and cry was instantly got up that I had been tampering with the affections of a young woman. What was that to me while I was safe, and possessed a fairer chance of a happier issue in Mr Glandville's family, where the plain and meek Maria seemed to challenge the most searching inquiry into her conduct and manners. There—caring nothing for time, provided I could, in the end, procure safety—I visited for about two years; and having, at my usual calls, discovered no indications of peril, notwithstanding the sharpest lookout I could sustain, I occasionally changed my hour of visit, with a view to take them by surprise. I found, one day, the mother in tears; and, as her husband had a pecuniary obligation to discharge for which he was unprepared, I felt no inclination to intrude myself upon grief; nor did I again enter the house of Mr Glandville; though I believe that either I or my fortune had really secured entirely the heart of Maria, who languished for me (they said) many an after day. Poor girl, she could not help the misfortunes of her father; and neither could I. After these failures, I resorted to the expedient of having several *studies* at one time; at Mr Grahame's, Mr Gentle's, and Mr Winter's, I pursued my system of investigation—keeping up a continued collateral espionage, in an underhand way, by means of acquaintances and servants; none of whom, however, (so adroitly did I manage matters,) ever knew that they were following any other pursuit than the generally believed one of scandal—the truest reflecting mirror, after all, of domestic life. I made great progress in all these investigations, and always found that love itself was the best agent for opening a woman's heart, and shewing her true character. The creatures then become unguarded, take liberties with you, and throw off the lying mask of etiquette which has beguiled so many good, honest men, to those dangerous rooks and quicksands of matrimony, where they must inevitably perish. I found, too, great service from the agency of time, who, sooner or later, wears out the spring of simulation, when the whole truth is exposed to the startled eyes of the fortunate Cœlebs. In these three families I kept up my espionage for two years; and in the beginning of the third, and when I had made professions of attachment to all the young ladies at the same time—on the principle of having several strings to my bow—I discovered a confirmed consumption in one, a love of "the crystal" in another, and a decided "point" at my money in the third—one of the greatest and most glorious triumphs I ever achieved in my life.

The hue and the cry now rose louder against me. Another glass—though not to drown the recollection; for I was cased in the steel or porcupine's quills—of an honest consciousness of having done my best to observe the first law of nature—to take care of myself—in other words, to turn the world to my purposes, in spite of broken hearts or scattered dreams of visions of enjoying my wealth, and bringing me to ruin and misery. I found some houses shut against me, yet I was resolved to persevere with the determination of Planeus, who, when he was banished for firing the city, declared that the decree was unavailing while his legs were left to him—a case not unlike my own, if, for the lower members of the Roman, were substituted the true heart of the Scotchman. The rich man never wants friends; and I was soon again at my work in the house of Mr Richard Palmer, a man of the law, whose sister, Olivia, presented many good points for admiration and study. The name of that woman dries up my throat till the wine hisses in it like the holy water *zor* on the Persian devil. I know not whether she and her brother had heard of my love doings in other parts; but the eyes of both spoke strange things, that defied my penetration. I loved her *ex aspectu;* but the stronger my love, the greater my caution; and my study of her artless art, a species of enchantment which I had not yet met with, and which threatened to master my severest espionage, was a work of labour and of time. Most of the other women I had disclosed my passion to, seemed to wish to catch me, and betrayed their love of my wealth through the false medium of over-acted affection; at least I came to think so, and that was enough for me, whether true or false; but Olivia, by an extraordinary art of seeming to account me and my wealth as nothing, roused in me a new feeling—a desire of conquest, that threatened to overthrow my guards, and stifle my caution. But I repressed the demon, and continued, while my heart was burning to search for indications of peril; yet her circumspection foiled me; and, in order to throw her off her guard, I told her the extent of my fortune, and declared (as was my custom) openly my passion. I had accomplished much in the other cases, by this powerful stroke of policy, which exhibits to a woman her power, and draws her out; but this creature was proof against my art, and seemed faultless—an appearance which roused my scepticism, and sharpened my endeavours to search the inmost recesses of her heart.

Day by day, for a period of three years, I watched and studied this object of my affections. I was cautious not to speak of marriage—a matter I kept always entirely distinct from the declaration of love. I thought, at times, she loved me; but there were occasions when some other feeling was busy with her heart, which my self-love would not allow me to consider as anything else than a mixture of wonder and slight anger, produced by my slow process of testing her. There is no doubt that I had done much to try her temper; yet, I had not done enough while a single suspicion remained that these indescribable looks she threw on me were not indications of a lurking tendency to break forth in some of the paroxysms of the virago—an incarnation of the devil that haunts those fair pieces of Nature's workmanship in so many forms. If I could have satisfied myself thoroughly that she was perfect in this respect, I believe I would very soon have braved, at last, the "evil domestic," and entered upon the dangerous ocean of the married life; but I had still doubts on the subject, and these were increased by a shrewd suspicion that she was under the training of her brother, a man I never could thoroughly analyze

So successful, hitherto, in unmasking the fearful dangers that lay in the way of my object, was I to be foiled here? No; but the woman who could stand the delay, the tergiversation, the watching, the suspicion I had exhibited for years, without shewing one single outbreak of fretfulness or ill-humour, was an extraordinary personage, even if she were backed and supported by her brother, with all the calm subtlety that the law engenders; and my policy behoved to be of no ordinary kind. I might have verified my suspicion as to her temper by insulting her, and I was not prevented from

doing it by any qualms of either the heart or the conscience; but I feared the brother—I confess it without a touch of shame; for I never gave out courage as any element of the moral constitution of an ambidexter, and I therefore had recourse to another scheme. I resolved to leave her for a whole year—an act surely sufficient to have roused one "milder than the charities." I put my resolution into effect; and, to give the scheme a zest of greater piquancy, made love to her friend and companion, Miss Sommerville, whom I proceeded to put to the test with as much assiduity as I had applied to the other objects of my investigation. My object in this was clear, and worthy of one of my genius; because, if I found that Olivia fired at my conduct, I could fall back, a safe Cœlebs, on the heart of the reserved lady, and marry her in the event of her coming unscathed out of the furnace of my trial. I knew very well what I might suffer from this in the estimation of the public; but would the incongruous and cruel marriage laws, which that public sanctioned, have liberated me from the evil of an unfortunate choice? The answer was enough, and ten times more than enough, to one who weighed the happiness of his entire life against the bubble reputation—a thing I have ever despised.

My scheme, for a time, wrought fair. I was a daily visiter at the house of Miss Sommerville's mother, who knew my wealth, and, of course, my value. I had little doubt that she laid before her daughter the splendid advantages of becoming the wife of one worth not less than a *plum;* but, never trusting to probabilities where certainties are within my power, I took care to let the young lady know the fact myself—that is, in my peculiar way; for, while I exposed, in an oblique manner, my wealth to the fair gudgeons, I took care, as I have already partly hinted, to keep the subject of marriage entirely distinct from both that of love and that of money. At the first, the young lady was kind, and her eye, like the Bononian stone, had stolen the glitter of the gold; but, all at once, her manner was altered, and I thought I could discover some connection between the change and the detected visit to her of Olivia's brother, whom I met one day as he was coming out of the house. When he saw me he started, clenched his teeth fiercely, and, in an instant, smiled to me more softly than he had ever done when his hopes of my becoming his brother-in-law were highest; accompanying his swave expression by a very low and humble bow, and holding out his hand, which I seized with an exuberance of honeyed kindness, and shook closer and longer than I had ever done that from which I had received more money than I was entitled to. We heaped compliments upon each other, and separated; he going home to Olivia, and I proceeding to her rival. The change upon her was marked and decided—the charm of my gold was gone, and the pretty fool rejoiced in the glow of a fancied noble sacrifice she was making to female friendship—a mere tickling of the brain; while her heart and soul might have been filled with the mathematical quantities of gold. The mother, too, was changed—she was rude—they were both rude; but I rejoiced, because I had gained a double object—having tested and discovered the temper of the young temptress, and laid a foundation for bringing out what I conceived to be the concealed flames of the wrath of Olivia, who would, of course, be informed of my having declared a passion for her friend. I left them, and returned no more.

Thus far my penetration and tact had been successful; and, though it was doubtless true that my triumphs were qualified by a loss of reputation—clearly evinced by the strange light of the eyes of my bowing acquaintances—I was solaced by the consciousness that I was only doing my duty in rolling round me the panoply of prudence, to guard me against unjust laws. Mark your triumph, ye legislators! whose statutes have compelled men to call in the aid of the devil to escape your toils—a bumper to your vocation, and another to nerve this hand that proceeds to record my defeat. My next step was to visit again Olivia, to complete my investigation, and bring her finally to the probation. I had met her brother several times, and was struck with his increased urbanity and kindness—an *intempestiva benevolentia* that made my eyes as sharp as those of the serpent of Epidaurus—

> "Cur in amicorum vitiis tam cernis acutum,
> Quam aut aquila aut serpens Epidaurus."

Horace lived not under *our* marriage laws, or he would have seen reasons for using sharper eyes than those of eagles or serpents, with too good evidence of the lamented vanity of the precaution. I was studying an attorney and not a woman; and "hence these tears"—these tears that drop in my wine-cup. What avails it to say that I suspected the laugh that came through open lips and clenched teeth, when I defied the art of a brother while I proved the sister?

The very next day I called upon Olivia. I met her brother in the passage leading to his business-room. He was kinder than ever. I had been nearly twelve months a stranger; yet there was no pique. His manner defied all my prior calculations; and all was blandness, greater than I had yet experienced. What meant it?

"I am pleased by this visit," he said, smiling; "I did not expect it, after so long an absence. Olivia has not been herself for these twelve months. She thought she had offended you—nay, sir, she took to bed."

The stroke was admirable. Even I was staggered, and forgot myself.

"Was she not angry with me?" said I.

"I could have wished she had exhibited so much of the woman," replied he, smiling. "Anger would have cured her."

I searched him, as he thus touched me on an assailable point. I thought he was sincere; and a delusion took me by surprise. Olivia loved me! Was this the fact? Nay, she had borne, for a period of twelve months, an insult which would have roused any other woman in the world, till she had cried, with the rival of Acis—

> "Torture, fury, rage, despair,
> I cannot—cannot bear!"

Was there so much virtue in woman?

"Will you not see her?" added he. "Nay, sir, but I do not ask you. I have my own fancies, and predilections, and whims, and do not blame you for being like myself. Perhaps the greatest fault in us, who dip deeply into the study of womankind, is, that we know them too well. He who knows them bewares of them."

"Sir!"

The monosyllable expressed my nonplus. The man was arguing against himself and Olivia; yet his *face* was sincere. I would study Olivia herself, however.

"I will take the punishment I deserve from her own hands," continued I, when I found that my monosyllable was not likely further to draw him out.

"She is a fool, sir," replied he, again smiling. "Her liver does not generate bile enough to keep her heart healthy. She is now in the parlour, where you have seen her so often. Go to her, and see what reception she will vouchsafe to her old friend, who has so long renounced us—surely not without some good cause."

"Cause," muttered I, as I left him, and proceeded to Olivia's room. The Writer had defied my penetration; but I might have a better chance with the object of my affections and study. I found her, bating a little paleness, as fair as ever. Her hand was extended to me with a placid gentleness of unsolicited forgiveness.

"You have been a stranger," said she.

"While you have been unwell," rejoined I, in reference

to the compliment to my power over her so well paid by the brother, and wishing my vanity to be again gratified by an admission from her own lips.

"I have," she replied, turning away, with good effect, her head; "but we must submit to the evils of life, when we have no power of conquering them."

So sweet a sentiment, (thought I,) from one whom I had made professions to, and then sworn love to her friend. Is she mortal?

"But you are now better, Olivia?" said I, approaching her, as she sat on the couch, and resuming once more my love tones.

"*Now* I am," she answered, with a side look at me of great power, though as soft as twilight.

And why now? (thought I.) Because I was again by her side? The thought dispelled a thousand doubts of my not being "of countenance enorm," as well as many a good reckoning of my Scotch prudence.

"And am I to count," she said, with a sigh, "the weeks of another year till I see you again?"

"No, no, Olivia," replied I, losing my mental balance; 'I have tested your love at the same time that I have proved your temper. I know that you were aware of my visits to Miss Sommerville; but my intentions in that direction were never serious."

"I never thought them so," she replied, with a look that might well have cut any foolish man, with a grain of irrational honesty in his heart, to the core; "but, serious or not, you have Olivia's forgiveness."

"Unasked!" I ejaculated.

"And, therefore, of the more value," she replied, smiling.

I clasped her in my arms, in a paroxysm of drivelling folly, and acted the lover in spite of the calculating usurer. I cannot tell how I *looked* this scene; but, though on former occasions I had thought I had detected glances which savoured of a disrelish of my face and manners, I could discover nothing now but what gratified my vanity.

Down, ye swelling spasms of a rankling heart! I could find no fault in this woman; take the admission, ye philogynists, and nurse it in your bosom as a cockatrice's egg. I agreed to marry her, but not before I settled cautiously the terms of a contract with her brother, whose eye I watched (as we consulted) like a tiger. He was the most difficult study I had ever met in my life; his smile seemed like a glance of the moon upon marble—at heart an inexorable bitterness, or hatred, seemed eternally shewing itself through the covering of blandness and amenity; but he was merely his sister's agent, and I was roused to a sterner guard over my interests. I would have said he hated me, if there had been no dues of a marriage-contract to resolve his hatred, and I had not been upon the point of becoming a relation. My mind was made up to disown him the moment I had his sister fairly in my power; but, in the meantime, till I manœuvred a favourable contract out of his hands, I resolved to shew him fair terms. He sent me a scroll of the writing that very evening. It was false, hollow, treacherous—wanting entirely the golden clause that shuts out the claims of the relations of the wife, in the event of her predecease. I flew with it to him, pointed out the deficiency, and enjoyed my triumph as I beheld through his very sternum the workings of his heart. I had caught him: he grinned in the toils, and smiled compliance. £500 a-year was filled up as the jointure, in the event of my death, (I could not take my money to the grave with me;) and in the event of Olivia's death, all was mine, including her trinkets, body habiliments, paraphernalia, everything, to her work-boxes and needles. I flattered myself I had made a good bargain; and what the law itself, independently of compact, would not have yielded me, I wrenched from it by the force of my own ingenuity. Alas! how much yet remained in the jaws of the monster.

The most redoubted doubter, is the most resolute actor when the doubt is resolved; and I proceeded firmly to the conclusion of my bargain, conscious and proud of my powers of averting the dangers of the marriage-law by my sternness, love, cunning, and supremacy over the woman who had consented to love and obey me. The contract was written out, and signed in duplicate. My copy I locked up, so that my wife could not approach it; for I knew too well the consequences of its being burned—a trick I made an iron-clasped security against; and as for Olivia's copy, she might give it to her brother, if she chose, or paper her hair with it. I was safe, and my safety was hers, in so far as she had a right to be safe. It was her request, through her brother, who smiled his inscrutable smile as he delivered it, that we should proceed to the clergyman's house on the following morning, to be married. I made no inquiry as to the reason of this request, and, safe in the precautionary arrangements I had taken so much care to perfect, I was left at liberty to gratify my vanity in rigging out myself properly for the momentous occasion, and making such preparations in my domestic economy as would produce a fair *coup-d'œil*—the best mode of producing an effect on the heart of a woman. Eleven o'clock was the hour fixed, and, with my friend, I was at the clergyman's house in good time. The intelligence that I, who (as the idiots of the world doubtless said) had broken faith with so many, was at last to submit to the yoke, had gone abroad; and there were curious loiterers about the door, whom I despised, and could have wished away. The noise of the wheels of Olivia's carriage was heard, and she and her female companion, Miss Sommerville, accompanied with her brother, were introduced into the apartment. She had never appeared so beautiful to me; yet there was a secret mutual intelligence between her eyes and those of her brother, that defied my scrutiny, and raised emotions within me that shook my heart. She scarcely looked at me; and when her eyes were turned on me, it was only to make me shiver by the phenomenon of a furtive glance; while, throughout the features of her inscrutable brother, there reigned a triumph, enthroned on the adamantine chair of obdurate hatred. At that moment I would have undone everything, and given five thousand pounds to be free; though, if any man had asked me for a reason, I could have given him none. The ceremony proceeded, and was finished. I offered my arm to my wife, to lead her to my carriage, that still stood at the door, along with that in which she herself had come. Her brother offered her also his, which she seized, and clung to—rejecting mine as if it had been a coiled viper. We bustled confusedly to the door together, and I ran forward to open the carriage and hand her in. There was a small assemblage of people collected around, and I turned my head in the direction in which the party came; but what new mystery again mocked my penetration? I saw my wife and her brother walk deliberately up to their own carriage, enter, shut the door, and drive off, amidst a mixture of half-repressed sounds of surprise, and the usual acclamations on the part of the crowd. I stood rivetted to the spot, with the handle of my carriage door in my hand; and felt an accession of dinus whirling round my brain, and scattering my thoughts like the broken reveries of a maniac. With no grasp of a defined purpose, I threw myself into the carriage—"For Mr Palmer's," I cried, with a trembling voice; and the coachman's whip sounded in my ear like the lash of the executioner.

The coach proceeded with the rapidity of an impatient bridegroom, and my thoughts with the velocity of a madman's. Was I now in the beginning of my marriage bliss? Was I now running after my wife in the first hour of my

wedded condition—belying my dreams of safety by practical pain—reversing the law of nature, and the conduct of Ariadne? Had all my pausing, pondering, tact, and study ended in being cheated by a woman, and involved in the horrid toils of the laws of the matrimonial Dracos, who have made wedded life a series of horrors. It was not within the powers of possibility. I was afraid to put my head out at the carriage window, to ascertain at what distance my wife was before me, and at what speed she was flying; and the sound of my own carriage prevented me from hearing the rattle of her extraordinary retreat. But at last the coach stopped; and I then heard, at a considerable distance, the sound of the other coach, which, having deposited its burden at the house of my brother-in-law had proceeded onwards. The coachman now opened the vehicle, and I alighted. My first act was, to cast a glance at the windows of the house, when I found the blinds drawn, and everything wearing the appearance of stillness and mystery; and my second was, to rush up to the door, and knock, with a hand that was irresolute, whether to make the brass sound like the voice of Cycloborus, or the love strain of Rocnabad—the demand of a creditor, or the petition of a debtor. I struck, I believe, a medium; and I had to strike twice before the door was opened to me.

"Is Mrs Bartlet within?" was my question to a bearded duenna who opened the door.

"Mrs Bartlet is indisposed and cannot be seen," was the answer of the woman, who smiled as her master had smiled when he saw me sign the contract of my bondage.

"Is Mr Palmer"——

The closing of the door in my face cut my question short, and my heart to the quick; my brain reeled with a new impulse; and, hurrying down the steps, I overtook the coach that had proceeded a few paces, flung myself into it, and bade the coachman drive home. Phlegethon has been described, Terni attempted, and madness essayed; but the state of my mind, as I rolled backwards and forwards in that return to my home, a husband-Cœlebs, married and unmarried, but firmly bound in the rankling chains, I had for a whole life trembled at, as more frightful than the bonds of the old Tyrrhenians, never can be described by mortal. I found waiting me Mr Melville, who had officiated as "best man," and proceeded to my house to wait my return.

"Where is the lady?" he cried, as I rushed into the house.

I could give him no answer, but, throwing myself into a chair, ground my teeth and clenched my hands to allay the fever that burned in my veins. My friend looked on in an amazement, which clearly indicated that what he had seen and now witnessed so far transcended even the extraordinary phenomena of married life, that even conjecture was set at defiance. I never was a consultor. I had hitherto thought myself a match for all mankind—the adviser and the advised—in all my schemes for bringing the puppets of the world into my toils; and now that I was wrestling in the meshes of a woman, I scorned the witness of my shame. My friend knew my peculiarities, and, seeing me disinclined to speak, quietly left me to the unrestrained indulgence of my fury. When I became able to think, a few scattered gleams of the truth broke in upon me. On looking back on the conduct of Olivia, it was too clear to me that she had never, from the beginning, had the slightest affection for me—if she did not hate me with a woman's hatred; and the lurking suspicion that I was ill-favoured, vindicated, for a moment, its place against the power of my habitual vanity. I had incensed her and her brother by my conduct, and vengeance in the latter had been made subservient to some scheme of sordid attorneyship which would quickly be evolved. It was my nature ever to rise and battle for triumph, amidst the strife of a contest that threatened to overcome me by those powers of cunning and management which I had made peculiarly my own; and in the middle of shame, and the consciousness of defeat, I felt, as my desire of revenge arose, a new-born strength, that promised yet to bring ruin on the heads of those who had dared to turn against me my own weapons.

Stamping through the room I had fitted up for her reception, I roared forth in my own ear—"Was this, after all, a marriage by the laws of Scotland?" and, ringing the bell with violence, I sent my servant for Mr Grinton, the Writer; and, when he came, laid before him as much of my case as might serve for information to enable him to resolve my doubts. He smiled, as if he envied the man the ability that could plan so dexterous a piece of chicane, and let me into the secret, that Palmer was reputed a brother of the craft who stuck at nothing—had no character to lose, but an inexhaustible stock of revenge to gratify at the expense of all who had injured him. There could not be a doubt, he added, that the marriage was as firm as the folds of a boa—all the vulgar twaddle about "consummation" being no better than Tory breath, (for the creature was a Whig,) and only calculated to lead simple Cœlebses astray. My only remedy was to wait *four years*, and then prosecute a divorce, on the ground of wilful desertion, which our law allowed; but which Paul (and he smiled knowingly as he proceeded) no more authorized, than he did a divorce on the ground of a wife having intended to murder the husband of her affections, or being somewhat too free of her tongue. My doom was apparently sealed—I could have no parley while in wroth.

I had recourse to wine; and Grinton—who loved liquor as well as he did chicane—was doubtless well-pleased; for he saw a law-plea by his mind's eye, and a bottle by his physical. When I had tossed over four or five glasses with a rapidity suited to the tumult within—

"What is the object of these fiends?" I cried. "No man, nor woman neither, acts without a selfish object. This woman has ruined her reputation, as well as my peace. Is it for nothing that one throws away the bubble which still pleases, and will please till the world itself is proved to be a bubble, and blows up into nothing."

"That there is an end and an object both," replied Grinton as he thought himself entitled to imitate me in the rapidity of his potations, "is clear. Palmer is too subtle a schemer to scheme for the ruin of his sister's reputation, without some benefit to be derived from it."

"Too clear!—too clear!" I rejoined impatiently. "I am aware that this is a marriage—that I am caught in the toils; but what can they gain by it?"

"They have begun by war at once," replied he. "They know that by this display of a long concealed hatred they will rouse you to a revenge which will be their gain; that you will not receive her now to your arms; that you will transact for a legal separation and an aliment."

"'Sdeath! but I shall not. I shall wait the four years—ay, and count every hour and minute of them; get my divorce on the ground of desertion; make a jubilee for bachelors; and execute a mortification for the support of a hundred Cœlebses, who shall get drunk every anniversary of my liberation."

"And is Palmer, think ye, not aware of what you can do?" replied my friend. "In a week hence, sooner or later, Olivia may present herself at your door for admittance into her own house. Reception will neither be her object, nor your inclination; and rejection will found her claim for aliment."

"I will receive her, sir!—I will receive her!" I cried, as I gulped another glass. "Were she a snake with a thousand heads, I will receive her, and embrace her with the kind

ness that crucifies—ay, and breaks bones as the lightning breaks them, and leaves the skin as fair as ever."

"Whereby you will only punish yourself," replied he calmly.

"There is no triumph in the world," I rejoined, "without self-infliction. I shall be happy by the thought of her misery! I shall gloat over it, sir, with the doating of a soft, calm vengeance! But it is too good to hope for; she will not put herself in my power."

"Then are both he and his sister mad," said my friend.

"Let it be so!—let it be so!" I rejoined. "Let them remain mad for four years, but not an hour longer, that, in coming to their senses, they may acknowledge my triumph, and their defeat."

And thus we continued our conversation till it became, on my part, a wild mixture of the expressions of disappointment, and the enthusiastic hopes of liberty. How long our meeting lasted, I know not. I found myself sleeping on a chair when I awoke about seven in the morning. Grinton had left me in that position after he himself had enjoyed the advantage of a recklessness and extravagance, into which I had been for once hurried by the stream of passion that had passed over me.

When I came to my sober senses in the morning, I saw matters in a different light. There was no enthusiasm of drunken hope in me now. The gudgeon-beast, the silly and dishonest public, I had flattered, and threatened, and subdued to my purposes; but what power did I possess against these odious laws of the realm, which reared their hydra heads against me, and made me curse the makers of them, as more ugly than Corytheus. My cogitations were vain, and time passed, while I saw nothing of my wife or her brother, though, I believe, the public knew enough of them and of me. I now hated her more than I had ever loved her; and the extent of that hatred might be known otherwise than by that comparison, when it is considered that all men of my class are soonest and most fiercely fired by our peculiar weapons being wielded against us by those we intended to victimize; but every thought, every inquiry, every investigation into authorities, satisfied me that my remedy lay in waiting for the expiry of the four years. Every day that passed seemed—merely as time—to be the food of my mind; and, while I sighed for the hours to come, I gloated over those that had been digested; yet, breaking forth and exclaiming, at intervals, against the monstrous absurdity of a law that immolates itself, and fools the people with a hope occupying a tenth part of a life. The petty boon of a divorce for desertion, to have been any boon at all, or more than an insult, behoved to have been conceded in a month's wilful desertion, as readily as in a dozen of years. But even the four years, I found, were not conclusive—a man being obliged to receive the serpent into his arms, if she chooses or condescends to come back, and sputters over him the poison generated by four years' hatred. Yet I sighed and groaned for the despised pittance of the penurious hand of the enemies of mankind that formed the law; and, God be praised! the revolution of time was not committed to them. The years did pass, and, as the period of my freedom and revenge approached, my returning independence swelled my bosom again, and I rejoiced in the view of my triumph. I learned that the days of the induciæ might run with the four years. Not a moment would I lose: my action was raised at the very hour, and Grinton was buoyed up with the prospect of a reward and a marriage-feast, on that day when I should be allied to liberty.

The light of that evening which preceded the day when a decree of divorce should pass in my favour, shines now upon my soul; but it is a false glow called forth by the charm of care expelling grape. Grinton was with me. My ear was never tuned to music; but, on that night, every hour that chimed from the clock was a sound from heaven. I despised the fears of the lawyer, as he croaked of the possibility of the woman (I will not call her my wife) still making her appearance, and my cackle of triumph was still convulsing my throat, when the door bell rang. I started to my feet, and flew to open the room door, when I felt myself pulled back by my companion.

"If it is she, what will you do?" he cried.

"Expell her, if she has no witnesses," I answered, in an instant; "and receive her, to torture her, if she has."

"Spoken like Apollo," replied the lawyer.

I hastened to the door, and opened it myself. The fiend was there in all the deformity of her beauty: her brother was also there.

"Mrs Bartlet is willing to return to the house of her husband," said her brother, in a calm voice; "and presents herself for the purpose of being received."

I looked forth, over their heads, and by their sides. I was as calm as Colanus in the midst of the burning pyre; or Mutius with his hand in the fire. I saw no one to witness against me.

"She may go to ——!" I roared in exultation, and slapped the door, with a loud sound, in her face.

I returned to Grinton, received his approbation of my conduct; and we passed the night in deep potations, and a triumph unqualified by the thought that I might be called upon to give my oath that my wife had not offered to return to me. Cords bind boys, and oaths fools—I was neither, and Grinton was true as the soul of his profession. Thus passed that eventful night. The morn came, and I waited the arrival of the lawyer to wish me joy; but he made not his appearance, for his courage was quelled, and I read the burning words of his note that the decree was stopped; that witnesses, who had been adroitly concealed from me by the dark, had sworn that I refused to receive my wife, and had expelled her from my house. That same day I received a summons for aliment, which I defended to the teeth. I lost it in spite of every piece of chicanery in Grinton's power, and was decerned to pay my wife £500 a-year during the period of my life, or until she chose to return to me. For twelve years has that money been wrung from my heart. I am now seventy years of age, and Olivia is not more than thirty-five. When I die, the same sum is due by the contract. Mark your triumph, ye legislators! and would that your spirits might hover round me when I die, that ye may hear the curses that will ride on the wings of my parting breath. Yet that time is not come, and this red wine may ward it off. So, here again!

Such is the narrative of one who, in endeavouring to wrest mankind to his purposes—and to make the laws subserve the private wishes of selfishness—was caught in the toils of his own schemes. If any one should doubt the truth of his narrative, and be rather inclined to hold him, whoever he may be, as an arch cynic, who gives us a wholesome satire upon a class of mankind under the garb of a personal confession, he may probably be near the mark. Doubtless there are bad wives, and bad husbands too; but we shrewdly suspect there would be a great many more of both, if the laws by which they are bound together for life, were relaxed for the expected boon of a miscalled liberty.



THE GOOD MAN OF DRYFIELD.

"To Let, the Mansion-House of Dryfield. This is a small, genteel, self-contained house, beautifully situated on the banks of the Clyde, with large garden, and seven acres of fine arable land attached. Rent moderate. Premises will be shewn, and other particulars given, by Mr Pentland, farmer, Minnigrain, near Dryfield, who is also empowered to transact all matters relative to the letting of the house and grounds."

Such, good reader, was an advertisement that appeared in the *Caledonian Mercury* some six-and-twenty years ago. Well, but what on earth has an advertisement of this sort to do with the Border Tales? Patience, kind friend—patience; and, as a certain humorous song—whose title we have forgotten—says, "You shall hear." This advertisement, commonplace as it may seem, possessed some interest for me at the time it appeared; for, at that very moment, I was commissioned, by a friend then resident in Jamaica, but who was contemplating an immediate return to his native country, to look out for exactly such a place as that described in the announcement above quoted.

Having some recollection of the place myself, which I had casually seen several years before, as I passed on the top of the mail, I felt convinced that it was precisely such a residence as my friend desired. Under this impression, I determined on paying Dryfield a visit, and making a personal survey of the premises. Conform thereto, the following morning found me on the top of the mail. In six hours afterwards, I was at Minnigrain, and in the presence of its worthy occupant, Mr Pentland. He was a decent, substantial-looking farmer—plain and unsophisticated in his manners, intelligent, and shrewd, with a spice of humour about him which he seemed to have some difficulty in controlling.

Having mentioned to Mr Pentland the purpose of my visit, and my wish to take a look of Dryfield and its premises, he instantly accompanied me thither—having previously provided himself with a couple of keys; one to procure us access to the garden, through which it was necessary to pass to reach the house; the other to admit us to the house itself.

Our way lay through a romantic wood, that grew on a steep bank overhanging the Clyde, and which was traversed by various winding paths. Having taken one of these, we soon threaded the little forest; and, emerging at its western side, found ourselves on a green lawn, at the further end of which stood the mansion-house of Driffel, as it was more shortly pronounced by the natives. It was a compact and comfortable-looking house, but had evidently been long untenanted. Everything around it was running to waste. The honeysuckle with which its walls had been clothed, had fallen from its fastenings, and was idly sweeping the footpath below; the flower-plats in front were overrun with weeds; the garden was uncropped; and shrubs, bushes, and trees, were revelling in an unprofitable luxuriance. Everything, in short, bespoke neglect, and the absence of a presiding care and taste.

"The house does not seem to have been tenanted for a long time, Mr Pentland," said I, as we walked towards the house.

"'Deed, it's a gey while since there was what ye may ca' a reglar tenant in't," replied my companion. "We hae had families from time to time, for a month or twa in the summer season, but nae reglar tenant since Mr Darsy himsel left, and that's gaun noo in ten years since."

"Is Mr Darsy dead?"

"Ou no. He gaed abroad for the benefit o' his health; him and his man Ramsay. He was to hae been back in six months, but he has never returned yet. But I'm sure the blessin o' the poor and the needcessitous 'll follow the worthy man wherever he goes."

"He was a benevolent man, was he?"

"That he was, sir. Just ane o' the best men breathin. Some folk thocht him a wee whimsical now and then; but his heart was in the richt place. He had just five hunner a-year; and I'm sure he gied awa three o't in charity, if he gied a saxpence."

"Any family?"

"No. He never was married, It's said that he was ance crossed in love in his younger days; but, whether this be sae or no, I dinna ken. There was naebody lived here wi' him but an auld maiden sister, his man Ramsay, and twa servant lasses. His sister's dead; and it's thocht it was partly her death that sent him awa frae Dryffield; for, they war just extraordinar attached to ane anither. Just to shew you, sir, how worthy a man he is," continued Mr Pentland, "the rent o' this property is, by his orders, to be handed owre to the minister, for the use o' the poor o' the parish."

Just as the conversation had reached this point, we reached the door of the house. Mr Pentland inserted the key, but found some difficulty in turning the lock, from it having become stiff and rusted through disuse. While he was engaged in alternately coaxing and forcing the obstinate bolt, my attention was attracted by an inscription on the stone over the door-way. This inscription was in part concealed by some straggling branches of honeysuckle which had broken loose from their fastenings, and were hanging over it.

These I removed with the end of my stick, and having done so, read—

> "To balance fortune by a just expense,
> Join with economy, magnificence."

The quotation I remembered was from Pope, and thought it rather a peculiar sort of taste that had placed it where I now saw it.

By this time, Mr Pentland had succeeded in opening the door; and we entered. I found the house to be an excellent one—well finished, commodious, and judiciously arranged.

Having gone through all the rooms, we finished our survey by a visit to the kitchen. On entering this apartment, the first thing that caught my eye, was a small board over the fire-place, on which, in gilt letters on a black ground, were the following lines:—

> "To worth or want, well-weighed, be bounty given
> And ease, or emulate the care of Heaven;
> Whose measure full o'erflows on human race.
> Mend Fortune's fault, and justify her grace."

"What!" said I, "Pope again?"

Mr Pentland smiled. "Ou ay, sir," he at length said, "Mr Darsy had an awfu wark wi' Pope; and so had his man, Ramsay. It was that brocht them first thegither, and it's maistly that has keepit them thegither ever since, nearly thirty year. Mr Darsy was aye gi'en us screeds o' Pope; and onybody that could quote Pope to him, was sure to win his favour, and to get a' the assistance he could gie them in whatever way they micht want it. It was a queer conceit o' his; and mony a time the worthy man was imposed on, by designin folk, through the medium o' this fancy. When ony o' that kind wanted his assistance, they had naething ado but get twa or three lines o' Pope by heart, come to him wi' a lang face, and tak an opportunity o' slippin out the lines, and their business was done. I've seen him actually shed tears when he was quotin his favourite author. He was just clean crazed about him. He made me a present o' the Essay on Man, and gied me nae rest, nicht or day, till I got every line o't by heart."

"But he did you a good service in that, my friend," said I: "it is a noble poem—full of fine thoughts, beautifully expressed."

"Nae doot o't," replied Mr Pentland: "I like the poem weel, and think as much o' Pope as ony man. He is a great philosopher, as well as a great poet; but, my excellent friend, Mr Darsy, just carried the thing a wee owre far. His admiration o' him, or rather his constant and open expression of that admiration, bordered on the ridiculous: it amounted to a weakness—although, in other respects, Mr Darsy was a man of great good sense. I've heard him and his man Ramsay—for he's just as great an admirer o' Pope as his master—firin quotations at ane anither for an hour thegither. Indeed they never spoke for five minutes without exchangin a couplet or twa, and seldom conversed on onything else but the merits o' Pope."

In this sketch of the worthy proprietor of Dryfield, I thought I recognised—what I always took much delight in contemplating—an original character; and this was one of the best sort—a compound of oddity and benevolence. What had just been told me of him, was enough to excite my curiosity, but far from being enough to gratify it. This, however, I hoped circumstances would yet effect for me; for, feeling amused by Mr Darsy's peculiarities, and interested by his worth, I determined on learning all about him that I could; and ample opportunity for doing so was subsequently afforded me.

Having expressed to Mr Pentland my satisfaction with the house, and my wish to take it, he proposed that we should adjourn to his residence, and there settle the transaction by missive. We did so; and when the business was concluded, Mr Pentland kindly suggested that, as the day was now far advanced, I had better remain with him all night, and return home the following morning with the first coach. To this proposal, seeing that it would afford me an opportunity of learning something more of Mr Darsy, I at once agreed, and was soon after put in possession, by my good host, Mr Pentland, of some particulars regarding that gentleman, which I have thought might not be found unamusing.

Of Mr Darsy's early history, (said Mr Pentland, who, at my request, began an account of his late worthy neighbour immediately after the dinner-cloth had been drawn,) I do not know much. He was bred, originally, I believe, for the church, but never took orders; for what reason I am ignorant; but have heard it alleged, that it was owing to an extreme diffidence of nature which shrunk at the idea of speaking in public.

Fortunately, his circumstances, although far from being affluent, were such as to enable him to yield to this timidity; and I am not sure that he ever adopted any regular profession in lieu of the one he abandoned. He bought Dryfield about twenty years since, when he also came to reside there; and it was then my acquaintance with him began. From that period till his departure for France, we lived in the closest intimacy and friendship; and during all that period I never heard or saw anything of him but what redounded to his honour. To quote his own favourite author—for he set us a' a-quoting Pope—

> "Him, portioned maids, apprenticed orphans, blessed—
> The young who labour, and the old who rest."

He was truly the Man of Ross, in all that is kind and benevolent."

"Oh, say," said I, smiling—

> "Oh, say, what sums that generous hand supply—
> What mines to swell that boundless charity?"

My kind host laughed heartily, and readily replied—

> "Of debts and taxes, wife and children clear,
> This man possessed five hundred pounds a-year."

Such a sum, or one thereabouts, was, in truth, all his dependence; yet, the good he did with it was amazing.

When Mr Darsy came first to our neighbourhood, his family consisted of his sister only, and one servant maid; and it is probable it would never have received any addition, but for the circumstances which added Sandy Ramsay to the establishment—as original a character as his master. Sandy was a sort of general jobber of country work—a good hand at cutting drains, clipping hedges, and felling and thinning timber, making and erecting wooden railings, &c. &c.

But, besides, and better than all this, Sandy was a learned man. He read a great deal, and was not a little vain of his acquisitions in this way. He was, however, a lively, good-natured little fellow, and very generally liked, notwithstanding that he gave himself out for a philosopher, and looked very grave and wise when he was asserting his pretensions to that character, or when he thought those pretensions were either overlooked or denied.

Such was Sandy Ramsay, and such was the person whom Mr Darsy found one morning, shortly after his arrival at Dryfield, working at a wooden railing at a little distance from the house.

"Good morning, honest man," said Mr Darsy, approaching him with that kindly familiarity of manner which distinguished all his intercourse with his inferiors.

"Guid mornin, sir," replied Sandy, resting on the wooden mallet with which he was driving the rails. "Grand wather for the country, sir."

"Excellent," rejoined Mr Darsy. "The crops in this neighbourhood look uncommonly well, and I think we shall have both an early and a plentiful harvest. Thanks be to God!"

"Yes, sir, as ye say, thank God for't," replied Sandy, "There's a reasonable prospect o' baith peace and plenty in the country; and, as Pope says,"

> "'This day be bread and peace my lot;
> All else beneath the sun,
> Thou knowest if best bestowed or not;
> And let thy will be done!'"

"Ah! Pope, my friend," said Mr Darsy, his eye sparkling with delight. "So you are conversant with Pope, are you?"

"A wee bit, sir. His works form the staple o' my readin. I admire baith his poetry and his philosophy."

"Ah, indeed! Well, do you know, I like that," replied Mr Darsy. "I'm one of Pope's worshippers too. He is my guide, philosopher, and friend.

> "'Correct with spirit, eloquent with ease,
> Intent to reason, or polite to please.'"

"Yes, sir; and, better still," replied Sandy, "he

> "'turned the tuneful art
> From sounds to things, from fancy to the heart.'"

'And," shouted Mr Darsy, in ecstasy—

"'For Wit's false mirror held up Nature's light—
Shew'd erring Pride, *whatever is is right.*'"

"And," exclaimed Sandy, energetically, and waving his hand aloft, in the excitation of his feelings, as he spoke—

"'That reason, passion, answer one great aim;
That true self-love and social are the same.'"

Mr Darsy, striking his stick emphatically on the ground—

"'That virtue only makes our bliss below;
And all our knowledge is ourselves to know.'"

Having thus finished the concluding part of the Essay on Man between them, Mr Darsy, with a gracious and benevolent smile, held out his hand to Sandy, seized that of the latter, and shook it with cordial warmth. From that moment, notwithstanding the disparity of their social positions, they were sworn friends.

In a short time after this, Mr Darsy proposed to Sandy to enter his service, at a fixed rate of wages, to look after his garden, and be otherwise generally useful. To this proposal the latter readily assented; and there have they been together ever since, quoting Pope to one another daily, and daily descanting on the merits of their favourite author.

Having now got an able and active assistant in Sandy Ramsay, and one who had a very competent knowledge of agricultural affairs, Mr Darsy determined on cultivating the few acres of ground which he had bought along with the house of Dryfield. His resolution before had been to let them; but he now bethought him of keeping them in his own hands. These lands had been allowed to run to waste by the former proprietor, who was a great speculator in everything and in every way where there was no chance of remuneration. One of these speculations was, to build, at various intervals, over the grounds alluded to, a number of fantastic tower-like structures, for a purpose which none could guess, and which was wholly unknown to all but the contriver himself.

Whatever the purpose was, however, for which these towers were erected, they were never applied to it. Some other whim struck the noddle of the speculator, and they were allowed—most of them only half-built—to fall into ruins; an eye-sore to look at, and an encumbrance to the ground.

These stone-and-lime vagaries Mr Darsy now determined on removing, and of applying the surrounding lands to their proper use. Full of this design, which had suddenly struck him one day as he was out walking, he hastened, on his return, to the garden where Ramsay was at work, and told him of his intentions.

"I shall have all these lands laid down in corn, Sandy," said Mr Darsy.

"Richt, sir, richt," replied the former, thrusting his spade into the ground, and resting his elbow on the apex of the upright handle. "Quite richt too."

"Another year," said Mr Darsy—

"'Another *year* shall see the golden ear
Embrown the slope, and nod on the parterre;
Deep harvests bury all his pride has planned,
And laughing Ceres re-assume the land.'"

"Yes, sir," replied Sandy—

"'"Tis use alone that sanctifies expense,
And splendour borrows all her rays from sense.'"

"No doubt of it, Sandy," said Mr Darsy. "Beautiful sentiment, and admirably expressed."

The project of cultivating the land having been thus settled by the assistance of Pope, Sandy was instructed to look out for the necessary means, proper implements, and, first and most important of all, a pair of good stout draught horses. This last want of Mr Darsy's was one that soon became known throughout the country; and, as Mr Darsy was always reckoned a liberal and punctual man to deal with, he had soon abundance of offers; and they were not a whit the less numerous, perhaps, that he was thought to be no great judge of the article he wanted.

Amongst those whose ears Mr Darsy's want of a pair of horses reached, were those of a certain dealer in horse-flesh of the name of William Craig, as great a rascal as Scotland perhaps ever had the honour of producing; but he was withal a pleasant knave, and always cheated with the greatest good-humour imaginable. The smile was never off his countenance, excepting when he saw it for his interest to look grave, and then he could put on a face of sympathy and sentiment that it would break your heart to look at. He was, in short, a most plausible and most accomplished scoundrel—clever, and well-informed.

On hearing that Mr Darsy wanted a couple of horses, and that he had already rejected several that had been offered him—

"I'll try my hand on him," said Willie; "and if I dinna fix him, blame me."

"Do you mean by gi'en him a fair bargain, Willie?" inquired the friend to whom he had made the boast above quoted.

"Never did that in my life to anybody, and I'm no gaun to begin now," replied Willie.

"Then, how do you propose to fix him, Willie, as ye ca't?"

"Leave that to me," said the honest horse-jocky. "I'll do him owre as clean's a leek. I'll *trot* him out as cleverly as I ever did ony beast wi' four legs. I hae the secret o him."

"What do you ca' the secret o' him, Willie? What do you mean by that?"

"Aha, lad! How's your mother?" replied Willie, laughing, and touching the side of his nose emphatically, with the point of his forefinger. "I'll keep my thumb on that till I hae tried it."

On that very afternoon, Willie posted off to Dryfield with a couple of horses on which he had practiced every secret of his art to give them a passable appearance. On one of the horses Willie himself was mounted; the other he led by a halter; and, thus disposed, arrived at a swinging trot at Mr Darsy's. That gentleman had seen his approach from a window, and, guessing the purpose of his visit, was now at the door to receive him.

Willie touched his hat:—

"Heard, sir, that ye war in want o' a pair o' guid workin beasts," said Willie, "and hae broucht ye twa prime anes here to look at. No a bonnier or better pair between this and Johnny Groat's, and just a real bargain as to price."

"Why, my good fellow, I certainly do want a couple of good draught horses," replied Mr Darsy, eyeing Willie's bargain with a scrutinizing look; for he had already been so often the subject of attempted imposition in the way of horse-dealing, that he could not help entertaining suspicions of the intentions of every one who approached him for such a purpose. "I certainly do want a couple of good draught horses," he said; "but really, being no great judge myself, and some attempts having been made to take me in, I—I"——

"Feth, I weel believe that, sir," interposed Willie. "It's just incredible the villany that's practised in this tred o' ours. Some men hae nae conscience, and wad sell their very souls for gould—gould—gould—that curse o' the human race, that some think was

——"'Sent to keep the fools in play,
For some to heap, and some to throw away.

"'But *I*, who think more highly of our kind,
(And surely Heaven and *I* are of a mind,)
Opine that Nature, as in duty bound,
Deep hid the shining mischief under ground.'

That's my opinion, sir," continued Willie; "and I houp

ye'll excuse the liberty I hae taen o' gi'en ye't in poetry, but Pope comes tricklin aff my tongue, whether I will or no, just like water aff a dyuck's back."

"Excuse ye, my friend," said the astonished and delighted Mr Darsy, with a gracious smile. "My dear sir, your quotation requires no apology. It is appropriate, and to the purpose. A fine idea—tersely and pithily expressed. The man, sir, who studies Pope as he ought to be studied, and who acts on the principles he inculcates, will infallibly secure

> "'What nothing earthly gives or can destroy—
> The soul's calm sunshine, and the heartfelt joy.'"

"Yes, sir," replied Willie.

> "'Say, in pursuit of profit and delight,
> Who risk the most, that take wrong means, or right,
> Of vice or virtue, whether blest or curst;
> Which meets contempt, or which compassion first;
> Count all the advantage prosperous vice attains—
> 'Tis but what virtue flies from and disdains.'"

"It is, it is!" shouted Mr Darsy, in ecstasy.

"Enough, my dear sir, enough," he said, extending his hand to Willie, while a tear of emotion glistened in his eye. "Come into the house, and take a little refreshment, and let us see if we cannot make a bargain about these horses. They look very well, and, I daresay, will suit my purpose."

"Just the very thing, sir, ye may depend on't," replied Willie, who had now dismounted, and was holding both horses by the halters. "There's that black ane, I'm unco sweert to part wi't; but the want o' siller gars a puir man mak mony a sacrifice baith to his interest and to his feelins. O' that black horse, sir, I may safely say there's no his match in the county; yet, I daurna, nor wadna ask his price for him, for it wad be considered just an imposition."

"But, my good friend," interposed Mr Darsy, "I hope you do not think that I would take advantage of you in any way—that I would avail myself of the urgency of your necessities, to give you less than the just value of your horse. God forbid! You shall have his price, be that what it may."

"Oh, I'm no misdootin that, sir, no the least; but"——

"I say, my friend, by the way," (here again interrupted Mr Darsy, as they approached the house, being now within a few yards of the door,) "be so good as make no allusion to Pope in the presence of my sister, whom you will likely see; for she, poor woman, has just as little philosophy about her as the rest of her sex. 'Woman and fool,' you know—

> "'Woman and fool are too hard to hit;
> For true no-meaning puzzles more than wit.'"

Willie smiled. "No far wrang sir, I dare say. It's, I doot, owre true."

"She's a good, kind-hearted creature," resumed Mr Darsy; "but if there be any one thing on earth that she abhors above all other things, it is Pope. She cannot endure his name, ever since she read his 'Characters of Women;' but you and I, my friend, know, that there is more truth in that essay than her sex would willingly allow.

> "'In them we various ruling passions find;
> In women, two almost divide the kind.
> Those, only fixed, they first and last obey—
> The love of pleasure, and the love of sway.'"

Having now reached the house, Mr Darsy desired Willie to remain a minute in charge of the horses, until he went for his factotum, Sandy Ramsay, whom he wished to see the animals, and whose judgment he meant to consult, as to their purchase. Sandy he found, as usual, in the garden.

"Here is a decent, honest, well-informed, and intelligent man, Sandy," said Mr Darsy, "with a pair of horses for sale, which I wish you to come and look at"

"What ca' they him, sir?" inquired Sandy.

"Why, I don't know; I did'nt ask his name," replied Mr Darsy.

"I hope it's no Willie Craig," said the former, drawing on his coat; "for he's a slippery chiel, Willie; and I wadna say that even my caution wad be a match for his cunning."

"Whether his name be Craig or not, I do not know," replied Mr Darsy; "but this I do know, that he seems to be a very intelligent and conscientious man. He is a great admirer of our favourite author, Sandy, and quotes him with great propriety and facility; and of such a man I would not willingly believe any ill."

"He quotes Pope, sir, does he!" exclaimed Sandy; "then, sir, he's just the man. That's Willie Craig, beyond a' manner o' doot; and the biggest rogue this day in Scotland."

"Come, come, Sandy," said Mr Darsy, a little severely—shocked at the idea of a rogue quoting Pope, and disbelieving the existence of such a moral incongruity. "Come, come, Sandy," he said, "you judge too harshly; you speak unguardedly. The man is, I doubt not, a very honest man; and 'An honest man,' you know, Sandy, 'is the noblest work of God.'"

"I've seen that disputed sir," said Sandy; "and, I think, after a', wi' some success. A man o' great parts and genius is surely a nobler creature than a'."

"I'm grieved, Sandy, to find your moral perceptions so weak," here interrupted Mr Darsy. "Don't you see, or rather will you not see that"——

"I really canna see, sir," interrupted Sandy, in his turn, "that"——

"Well, but let me explain myself," again interrupted Mr Darsy; and having at length obtained this permission, he went on to expound the disputed text, after his own views of its bearings.

Sandy replied; Mr Darsy rejoined; and a hot dispute, of a good half hour's continuance, ensued between master and man, on the moral points involved in the quotation; such disputes, by the way, being a frequent occurrence between them; for, although they agreed most cordially on the general merits of Pope, there were many minute points—some, as to the meaning of passages; others, as to their morality—on which they differed, as on the present occasion, and on which they spoke for hours on end.

To return to the instance just now under notice:—They were thus engaged—that is, settling the moral bearing of the quotation above given, and so earnest in their employment as to be totally oblivious of everything else—and, amongst the rest, Willie Craig and his horses—when Miss Darsy came running into the garden just as her brother had begun a new section of his defence of Pope, with—

"Pope, sir—I say Pope distinctly means"——

"Gracious heaven, Mr Darsy!" exclaimed Miss Sarah "are you at that odious Pope again? Have you forgotten that there has been a man with two horses waiting on you for this half hour past. It is too bad—too bad, Mr Darsy."

"I acknowledge it, my dear—I acknowledge it," replied the benevolent and good-natured Popite, smiling kindly on his sister; "but I am sure the honest man will forgive me when I tell him the cause."

"Will he?" said his sister. "I should rather think he will consider it an aggravation of the offence."

"There you are wrong, Sarah, my dear," rejoined Mr Darsy; "for the man understands these things."

"What!" exclaimed his sister in alarm—"Does *he* quote Pope too? Do horse-jockeys quote Pope?"

"And why not, my dear?" said Mr Darsy, gladly seizing on this general query to avoid making any discoveries on the particular one. "Why not, my dear? Why may not a horse-jockey understand and appreciate Pope as well as any other man? There is nothing to hinder him."

"Oh, certainly not," replied Miss Darsy; "but, oh, if he was dosed wih Pope as I am—if he had Pope! Pope! ringing in his ears night and day, in all situations and on all occasions, as I have—he would grow sick, sick, at the very name."

"Ah! Sarah, Sarah!" replied her brother, smiling—

——"'believe me—good as well as ill—
Woman's at best'"——

"Pope again!" screamed Miss Darsy, putting her fingers in her ears, and rushing distractedly away from her Pope-mad brother.

The latter looked after her with a smile of pity, and perhaps a very slight matter of contempt mingled with it, and began again, and finished with additional emphasis, the quotation in which he had been interrupted. Then, turning to Sandy—

"Let us go and take a look of this honest man's horses, Sandy," he said. "We have used him rather ill, after all; but I'll explain."

In the next minute, the parties had met; and the first thing Mr Darsy did was to explain to Willie, as he had proposed to do, the reason of his absence.

"A' richt, sir—a' richt," replied Willie, graciously. "There's far frae bein ony harm dune; and, besides, your excuse is a guid ane, although ye had been an hour langer."

Willie, at the special request of Sandy Ramsay, now proceeded to put his horses through their paces; and, while the former was at a little distance in the performance of this duty—"Is that the man you meant, Sandy?" said Mr Darsy.

"I dinna ken him by sight, sir—only by repute," replied Sandy; "but, if he quotes Pope to you, he maun be the man; for he's a cunning scoundrel, and, doubtless, kens you're fond o' the little crooked poet."

"Sandy, Sandy, you have a scurrilous tongue," said Mr Darsy. "You'll find the man prove an honest one, I have no doubt; and will, I am sure, feel then ashamed of what you are now saying to his prejudice."

"Maybe, sir; but I'll be surer o' my man after I hae heard a quotation or twa; and still surer after ye hae bocht the horses; for, if he doesna *do* ye, he's most assuredly no Willie Craig."

Here the conversation was interrupted by the return of the horse-dealer, who approached them, leading one of his horses at a full trot. Both animals having been subjected to this display—

"Now, my good friend," said Mr Darsy, "what's your price?"

"Why, then, juist to be at a word wi' ye, sir," replied Willie, taking off his hat with one hand, and scratching his head with the other—"I'll take thirty guineas for the black ane, and twenty for the brown; and I'm sure that's a dead bargain—juist throwin the cattle awa. It's no a month since I was offered forty guineas in my loof for that black beast; but I wasna sae hard pressed for siller then as I'm noo, and I refused it."

"Sandy," said Mr Darsy, turning to the farmer, "what do you say to these prices? You have some knowledge of horses."

"I say, sir, that, as near as I can guess, they're juist aboot the dooble o' what they ocht to be. That black horse, if I'm no mistaen, is broken-winded, and 'll be dead lame in a week; and the brown ane's no a grain better."

Willie looked at Mr Darsy with a smile of conscious integrity, and of calm contempt at once of the slander and the judgment of the slanderer. The unsuspecting Mr Darsy returned the look, attributing Sandy's decision to prejudice.

"Come now, Sandy," said the former "forget that you have any interest to serve in this matter, and deal fairly between man and man."

"But it's no between man and man, sir," said Sandy: "it's between man and a horse-jockey; and it's weel kent, that's no a fair match. It wad tak the deil himsel to deal wi' a horse-couper."

Willie smiled again the smile of conscious innocence; and, turning to Mr Darsy, said—

"I rather think that ye will agree wi' me, sir, that

"'Honour and shame from no condition rise;
Act well your part'"—

and he looked expressively at Sandy—

"'*there* all the honour lies.'"

"Unquestionably," replied Mr Darsy; "it is

"'Worth makes the man, and want of it the fellow;
The rest is all but leather and prunello.'"

"Yes, sir," said Willie—

"'For modes of faith, let graceless zealots fight,
His can't be wrong whose life is in the right.'"

"Certainly not—certainly not," exclaimed Mr Darsy, in raptures.

"'One self-approving hour whole years out-weighs
Of stupid starers, and of loud hurras.'"

"Nae denyn't," said Willie: "and, to a' wha doot it, I wad say—

"'Know, then, this truth, (enough for man to know,)
Virtue alone is happiness below.'"

And, as he repeated the last line, he laid his hand with solemn emphasis on his heart.

This last quotation did Willie's business.

"Come, come," said Mr Darsy, shedding tears of delight, and taking Willie by the arm to conduct him into the house—"let us settle this small matter at once, and off hand. Just say at once, my friend, the lowest sum you really will take for these horses, and they are mine. Sandy there is a well-meaning man, but he has his prejudices as we all have."

"Weel then, sir, just to be at a word wi' ye," replied Willie, "I'll tak nine and twenty guineas for the black horse, and nineteen for the brown ane; and if that's no a bargain, I never gied or got ane in my life."

"They're no worth the half o't, I manteen," exclaimed Sandy, energetically.

"Hush, Sandy, hush man," said Mr Darsy. "I'm sure the horses are a fair bargain. This honest man would never ask more than they are worth."

"Wadna he, feth!" said Sandy, with a satirical smile. "Sir, I'm thinkin ye'll fin' out that before ye're a week aulder. Wait ye till the horses hae been twa days in the plough, and ye'll see whether he has asked mair than the worth o' them or no. I wadna trust him farer than I could throw a bull by the tail."

"Sandy, Sandy," exclaimed Mr Darsy, in a deprecating tone, "you have really a scandalous tongue. Have you forgot that beautiful verse in the Universal Prayer—

"'Teach me to feel another's wo;
To hide the fault I see;
That mercy I to others shew,
That mercy shew to me.'"

"That's a' very weel, sir; but I canna agree to hide the *cheat* I see—that's a different sort o' thing a'thegither."

"Sandy," said Mr Darsy, in a still more angry tone, "I really will hear no more of this." And, thus rebuked, Sandy said no more; he saw it would be useless.

Leaving the latter in charge of the horses, Mr Darsy and Willie now went into the house; and there the latter received the price of his cattle, together with a comfortable refection, during which he and his host kept up a running fire of quotations from Pope.

The former, as the reader will recollect, had cautioned the latter not to make any allusion to the author just named

in the hearing of his sister; and this caution Willie observed. He took care to make no quotations while she was present; but he had not been put on his guard against her overhearing them, and the consequence was, that some of them were made in a tone so emphatically loud, that she did overhear them, even from the distance of an adjoining apartment. Perhaps few else than Miss Sarah could have discerned what were the words so spoken; but *her* ears were so sensitively alive to the language of the abhorred Pope, that she at once recognised them; and on doing so, immediately sent for her brother to come and speak with her, for she had known him to have been repeatedly swindled by Pope-quoters before, some of whom had committed a scrap or two to memory for the express purpose.

"James," said Miss Sarah, on his coming into the apartment where she was, "I hear that man quoting Pope. Now, James, I beg you'll be on your guard; for you may depend upon it he intends to cheat you. Recollect how often you have been taken in by Pope-quoters. There was the man that borrowed five pounds from you, on the strength of a quotation; there was the man that got your name to a fifty pound bill, of which you had afterwards to pay every farthing, through precisely a similar claim on your bounty—for he had no other; then there was the fellow whom you recommended to the wood-merchants, and who forged a bill on his employers; then there were the silver spoons that you bought from the packman, and that turned out to be pewter and tin—all because they quoted Pope; then there was——But it would take me a week to go over half the impositions of which you have been the victim, through that detested and detestable Pope."

To this tirade poor Mr Darsy listened with the utmost patience and meekness, while a smile of good-nature, blended with an expression of pity for his sister's blindness to the merits of the poet, played on his intelligent and benevolent countenance.

"Well, Sarah, my dear," he said, when his sister had done speaking, "if I have been taken in by these people, as I am willing enough to allow I have, whether does the shame and disgrace lie with them or me?"

"I do not know, James, where the shame and disgrace lie," said his sister; "but I have a pretty good guess, and so have you, where the loss does. But all that I have to say just now, James, is—be on your guard in your dealings with this Pope-quoting horse-couper."

Mr Darsy was about to come out with a quotation in reply—he had a very apt one at his finger-ends; but, recollecting that this would only farther irritate his sister, he made a violent effort and suppressed it, and merely said, with his usual gentle and benevolent smile—

"I'll take care, Sarah, my dear, I'll take care." And, saying this, he left the apartment, and rejoined Willie Craig, who, soon after, took his leave with his money in his pocket, and a good dose of whisky punch under his belt."

On leaving the house, Willie came accidentally across Sandy Ramsay, who was at the moment in the act of yoking the black horse to a cart.

"Ye hae gotten a prime beast there, Sandy," said Willie.

"If we hae, I'm thinking we hae paid as weel for him," replied the latter, drily. "I'm dootin ye hae saft-saped the master to some purpose. Ye hae come Pope owre him, as other folks hae dune before ye."

Willie smiled significantly, clapped his finger to his nose, and walked on without vouchsafing any other reply.

"What horse is that, Sandy?" said Mr Darsy, on the forenoon of the second day after Willie Craig's visit, as the former approached the house, leading an old grey, lame beast by the halter.

"Do ye no ken him, sir?" replied Sandy, with an ominous smile.

'No," rejoined Mr Darsy, gravely.

"Indeed, it's little wonder. This is Willie Craig's *black* horse, but your grey ane."

"What do you mean, Sandy?" said Mr Darsy, in a tone of alarm. "You don't mean to say that that's my horse, my black horse?"

"It's a' that's for him, sir," replied Sandy. "A shower o' rain's made a' the difference. It has washed him into what you see him—made him as grey's an auld rat; but, his change o' colour's no the warst o't. See, he hasna a leg to staun upon; and every teeth that was in his head's faun oot. There they are, every ane." And Sandy pulled out a handful of horse-teeth out of his pocket. "I hurried him hame out o' the pleugh," continued Sandy, "before he wad fa' in pieces a'thegither, as I expected every moment he wad do."

Mr Darsy held up his hands in amazement at this most extraordinary metamorphosis of his famous black charger, and muttered an ejaculation of surprise at the very strange occurrence; but said nothing for a few seconds. Although he said nothing, however, he felt a good deal; not for the pecuniary loss it involved—for that he did not care—but for the credit of the admirers of Pope. His sister, too—what would she say to it? Here was another instance of imposition chargeable against his adored author, to add to the long list of which she was already in possession. It was an awkward affair. He would ten times rather that the price of the horse had been thrown into the sea; and this he would cheerfully have done, had the alternative been put in his power. But there was no help for it.

"Sandy," said Mr Darsy, after musing for a moment on the astounding deception which had just come to light, "I'll tell you what it is, regarding this very strange affair. I think it very possible—nay, very likely—that the man, Craig, has been himself imposed upon with this horse, and that he knew nothing of its defects; for I cannot believe that so decent, intelligent, and well-informed a man as he is, could be guilty of such villany as this. I cannot believe it. Now, then, Sandy, I'll tell you what you'll do—you'll take the brown horse"——

"Wi' your leave, sir, I'll no do that; for yon beast's no chancy to come near, let alane to ride. He's the maist vicious brute I ever saw; and 'll neither hap, stap, nor win. I dinna think ye'll ever get ony guid o' him."

"God bless me!" exclaimed Mr Darsy, confounded at this additional misfortune; "he seemed quiet enough when brought here by Craig."

"Nae doot o't;—he did," replied Sandy; "and heaven knows hoo the scoundrel managed it! But he's a very different thing noo, I can tell ye, sir."

"Dear me! that's really odd," said Mr Darsy. "Well, then, Sandy, I'll tell you what you'll do: you'll go to our good neighbour, Mr Pentland, and get the loan of a pony from him, and ride over the length of Craig's—he lives, you know, at Longlane; it's only about nine miles distant—and tell him what has taken place; and I have no doubt he will at once refund the money; or, at any rate, give us other horses instead of those we have bought. He, indeed, said he would do the former, if we found anything wrong with them within a month."

"Catch him there, sir, if ye can," said Sandy. "The deil a boddle o' the price he'll ever gie back. He's no sae saft in the horn as that. He wad promise ye, I hae nae doot—he promises the same thing to every ane he sells a horse to; but whar's the man ever got a penny back frae Willie Craig, for a' that? I wad gie half-a-croon mysel to see him."

"Well, well, but do you just try him, Sandy," said Mr Darsy; "and I have no doubt you will find all turn out right, notwithstanding of appearances."

Thus summarily enjoined, Sandy obtained the loan of a

pony, mounted, and set off for Longlane, to have an interview with Willie Craig on the subject of his master's purchase.

Willie was standing at the door of his own house when Sandy approached; and, knowing well what he came about, would have retreated; but it was too late. He was seen; and, aware of this, he kept his ground manfully, and resolved to face out fearlesssly the coming storm, as he had done many a one of a similar kind before. On Sandy's approach, Willie, thrusting his hands into his breeches pockets, and bursting into a loud laugh, hailed his coming visiter with—

"Come, then, my friend! my genius! come along!"

"Ay, I'll come along," replied Sandy, angrily; "and, maybe, to your cost."

"Awake, my St John!" shouted Willie—

> "Awake, my St John! leave all meaner things
> To low ambition, and the pride of kings;
> Let us, (since life can little more supply,)
> Than just to look about us, and to die."

"Come, come, Willie, nane o' yer blarney for me," said Sandy, now dismounting. "Ye're no gaun to saft-sape me that way. What kind o' horses were they ye selt us?"

"Just the very pick o' the country," replied Willie, coolly.

"Ay, if ye mean the warst," said Sandy. "But, to come to the point at once—I'm sent here, Willie, by Mr Darsy—although I ken weel it's a fruitless errand—to tell ye that yer horses hae turned oot to be no worth their hides; that yer black ane has changed to a dirty grey wi' a shower o' rain, and is dead lame; and that the brown ane 'll neither work in plough nor cart."

"Dear me, Sandy, ye surprise me!" replied Willie, with a look of amazement as like the genuine as it was possible for any man to assume.

"Maybe I do," said Sandy; "but I hardly believe it. However, this being the case, my master has sent me to say that he expects you'll refund him the siller, as ye promised, or find him ither twa horses worth the amount, in their stead."

"Whee-ee-ee-ou!" whistled Willie. "Is that the next o't? Weel, I didna think your maister was sae unreasonable a man as that comes to, Sandy; but there's a heap o' queer folk in this world."

"My feth! there's that," said the latter; "and some o' them no far aff."

"As lang's *ye're* sae near, ye may say that, Sandy," replied Willie; "but to gie ye an answer to Mr Darsy, tell him, wi' my compliments, Sandy, that there's a truth among Pope's maxims that he doesna seem to hae fan oot. Tell him, wi' my best respects, that, in

> "'Spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
> One truth is clear, whatever is, is right.'

Tell ye him *that*, Sandy, and I'm sure he'll be perfectly satisfied."

"Do ye no mean to refund the money, then?" inquired Sandy.

"Deil a cowrie," said Willie.

"Nor to gie him ither horses in exchange?"

"No a hoof."

"Weel, then, *ye* are an infernal scoundrel—that's a I hae to say," replied Sandy, remounting his pony, and starting off on his return home.

On arriving at Dryfield, Sandy hastened to Mr Darsy's apartment, to inform him of the result of his mission; but, on opening the door, drew hastily back again, on finding a stranger in the room.

"Come in—come in, Sandy," said Mr Darsy, on observing the former retreating. This gentleman will excuse your intrusion; for he is a

> "'Friend to truth! of soul sincere,
> In action faithful, and in honour clear.'"

It might be so—of this we shall be better able to judge by and by; but the reader will think with us, we have little doubt, that this was saying rather too much of an acquaintance of half-an-hour; for no longer had the stranger been known to him by whom he was thus so highly complimented. Mr Darsy's visiter was, or, at least, represented himself to be, an itinerant preacher, who aware, as he said, of that gentleman's benevolence and hospitality, had taken the liberty of calling on him as he passed on his pious vocation. This account of himself and calling, he wound up with a very apt quotation from Pope; and, we need hardly add, that it was to this circumstance he was mainly indebted for the rapid progress he had made in Mr Darsy's affections.

To return to our story:—On Mr Darsy's repeating the couplet above quoted, the stranger, who was a decent, quiet, elderly man, dressed in somewhat rusty blacks, smiled at the compliment, and looked graciously on Sandy, as if at once to assure him that he need be under no restraint on his account, and that he was, in truth, the worthy person which Mr Darsy had represented him to be. Thus encouraged, Sandy entered the apartment; and, at Mr Darsy's request, told the result of his mission. On hearing it, the worthy man merely shook his head, and said—

"Well, well, Sandy, there's no help for it. We must just take better care next time."

He then explained to the stranger gentleman the nature of the transaction. The good man was horrified, held up his hands in amazement, and recited, with much feeling and solemnity—

> "The good must merit God's peculiar care;
> But who but God can tell us who they are?"

"Ah, who indeed?" said Mr Darsy, smiling. "There is the difficulty."

"Ay, there, indeed, it is," said the stranger, smiling in his turn. "Who but God can tell the pure from the impure of heart? Who but he separate the tares from the wheat—the corn from the chaff? None else, indeed, my respected friend"—looking benevolently on Mr Darsy.

"My dear sir," replied the latter, emphatically, and taking his benevolent-looking visiter by the hand, to mark his deep sense of the truths which he delivered. "My dear sir," he said, adding no more in words, but *looking* the remainder of the sentence, which, when translated, said—"you speak well and wisely." After a moment—"My good sir!" exclaimed Mr Darsy, glancing at his visiter's shoes, which appeared much travel-soiled, "I suspect you have had a long walk to-day. You seemed fatigued. Now, you will take a little of something or other—a glass or two of wine, or a little brandy, or something of that sort, till dinner is ready."

"You are too good—too good, my very excellent and much respected friend," replied the stranger; "but," he added, with a subdued yet significant look, "there are other men of Ross than he whom Pope celebrated. There are others—

> "'Whose causeway parts the vale with shady rows,
> Whose seats the weary traveller repose.'"

This couplet, which was given in a mild and gentle tone, was so palpably directed to Mr Darsy, that he could not avoid seeing its intended application to himself; and, seeing this, he shook his head and smiled a disclaimer.

"My good friend," he said, "I have but slender pretension to any portion of that noble character, so masterly drawn by the immortal bard of Twickenham; yet do I agree with what the poet elsewhere says, that

> "'All fame is foreign but of true desert—
> Plays round the head, but comes not to the heart—
> One self-approving hour whole years outweighs,
> Of stupid starers and of loud hurras;
> And more true joy Marcellus, exiled, feels,
> Than Cæsar with a senate at his heels.'"

The stranger smiled, bowed, and looked benevolently on his host.

"Beautiful—beautiful!" he exclaimed, in a tone of rapture. "How terse—how forcible. Yet, Mr Darsy, there are those—ay, there are those who say that Pope is no poet!"

Mr Darsy smiled grimly.

"I have heard," he said, "that there are such monsters in human shape; but I have never been so unfortunate as to meet with one of them. If I did, I do not know what I should do. I think I should murder the Goth off-hand. I believe I should. No human patience could stand against such heresy—such blasphemy, as I may call it."

Mr Darsy now rung the bell, and desired the servant to put some wine and brandy on the table. The order was immediately complied with, and the two Popites forthwith drew in.

"Wine or brandy, my dear sir?" said Mr Darsy.

"Why," said the gentle stranger, who, by the way, had given in his name as Claythorn—"why," he said, with a quiet, pleasant smile, "I will take a little brandy, if you please. Wine doesn't agree with me. I find the alcohol safer."

"Then help yourself, my dear friend," replied Mr Darsy; and Mr Darsy's friend did help himself, and that with a liberality which was rather surprising in one of his cloth; although it would not have surprised any one who had studied and drawn the proper conclusion from the appearance of his nose, which was of a bright, luminous red. Having finished his first jorum, Mr Darsy pressed his dear friend to another tifter; and his dear friend, nothing loth, did as he was desired; presenting satisfactory evidence, that a love of Pope, and of brandy and water, were perfectly compatible, doubt it who might. Opened up by the benign influence of the alcohol, the itinerant preacher now began to give Pope by the yard. Before, he had dealt him out sparingly—in bits and fragments: he now gave whole pages on end, to the inexpressible delight of his entertainer, who, having been induced, by the rarity of the occasion—the meeting with so enthusiastic an admirer of his beloved bard—to take a glass or two of wine extra, gave as ample measure in return.

The conversation between the two Popites was thus reduced to nothing—only a word or two now and then; the rest was entirely made up of quotations. While Mr Darsy and his guest were thus employed, a servant came to annouce that dinner was on the table. Both immediately rose to their feet. When they had done so, Mr Darsy took the preacher by the hand, and said, in an under tone—

"Now, my dear, good friend, when you go down stairs you will see my sister. She will dine with us. A good creature as ever lived—an excellent creature. But—but—I am ashamed to say it. The fact is, and you know it, my dear friend, that

"'Good, as well as ill,
Woman's at best a contradiction still.'

My sister, in short, my dear friend, has no fancy for our adored bard. I can't account for it; but so it is. Therefore, if you will just be so good as say nothing about him while she is present, it will be as well. No quotations, you understand. We'll have our revenge for this restraint when she retires. We will resume the subject, then, my dear sir," added Mr Darsy, slapping his guest, in a friendly and jocose way, on the shoulder, as he spoke. "We'll have a night of it; and I'll smuggle down *his* works from my library, and we will glance them over together when we've got the room to ourselves. That will be a treat, eh?"

Thus cautioned as to his conduct in the presence of Mr Darsy's sister, Mr Claythorn descended to the dining-room with his host. Not a word—not the most distant allusion to Pope, escaped either of the two gentlemen; so that, whatever Miss Darsy's suspicions of the case might be—and she certainly looked as if she had some suspicions of it—nothing transpired to give her assurance of the fact. On her retiring, however, the pent up sluices of the Popites were thrown open, and out there rushed two impetuous streams of poetry; sometimes blending, sometimes alternating, and sometimes running counter to each other. Mr Darsy was delighted—more than delighted with his friend; for he had never, in the whole course of his life, met with one who could quote his favourite author with such facility and at such length, as the guest whom he was now entertaining; neither had he ever met with one who had so deep, so thorough a reverence for the mighty moral poet.

This was altogether, in short, one of the happiest nights he had ever spent in his life. At its close, Mr Darsy accompanied his guest, who he insisted should remain with him all night, to his bed-room, and parted from him there with a very apt quotation, to which his friend replied with another no less felicitous, which he delivered in a very feeling and impressive manner. On the following morning—

"What keeps your reverend friend, brother?" said Miss Darsy, somewhat sneeringly—for she had strong suspicions of the stranger's being a Popite—as she sat at the breakfast-table, waiting the appearance of that person, before proceeding to discharge the duties of the morning meal.

"Really, my dear, I don't know," replied Mr Darsy, "The poor man is fatigued, I daresay; and we sat up rather late last night."

"Ay, brother, I fancy you found him a very pleasant, intelligent companion," said Miss Darsy, with a look and tone of peculiar meaning.

What this meaning was, Mr Darsy perfectly understood. He knew that his sister was at once insinuating her suspicions of the stranger's Popism, and driving at a discovery of the fact. Aware of this, and by no means desirous of coming to any explanation on the subject, Mr Darsy, without noticing his sister's remark, said he would "just step up stairs to see what was keeping Mr Claythorn," and deliver himself (but of this he said nothing) of a happy quotation which had occurred to him, and which he thought would form an exceedingly appropriate greeting.

He entered his friend's bed-room; there was no movement. He drew aside the curtains; the bed was unoccupied. The Pope-quoter had decamped. He was off; and off, too, were a dozen silver spoons and a small gold watch; all of which property had been unguardedly left in the room in which he slept.

Here ended my good host's (Mr Pentland's) anecdotes and sketch of the worthy proprietor of Dryfield; but, he added, he could give as much more of the same kind, if I chose, as would fill half-a-dozen volumes. I thanked him, and said that I would rest content with what he had been kind enough to give me, in the meantime; but that, if the readers of the "Border Tales"—for which, I told him I intended these memorabilia—desired any more, I should, perhaps, take the liberty of applying to him again.

WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE IMPRUDENT MARRIAGE.

Sergeant Square again resumed the narrative of his adventures:—

There is a strange feeling, that every reflecting person must have often been conscious of, accompanying the idea of time. We feel as if in contact with the past, as far back as our memory can reach. If our reading has been extensive, it requires reflection to disentangle the events of early ages, as well as those of a more recent date; and, even as regards the time to come, we feel as if it also were for us, until the melancholy certainty of the shortness of life forces us back upon the present moment, which, until passed, we cannot call our own. Neither is there a situation in which we can be placed, in which we do not feel some cause of uneasiness, from the faintest shade of unfulfilled anticipation, to the depth of real suffering.

Gloomy were the reflections that haunted my mind for the first three weeks after my arrival in London. Often and far as I had been from Scotland, never until now had I been home-sick—if it could be called so in one who had neither kindred nor home in the world. Destitute of kindred as I was, the feeling seemed to extend my relationship—every Scotchman being my relation, and his accents music to my ears. An unaccountable melancholy was upon me; and I felt a strange presentiment as if some evil were about to befall me. I felt no pleasure, as I was wont, in walking about. My time was spent at my lodgings, in Lower Thames Street, save when I went occasionally to the neighbourhood of Covent Garden, to visit Captain H——. Even these visits had become irksome, as no good seemed likely to arise to me from them. I was always received in the most friendly manner. Still there was a constraint upon me I could not overcome, arising from the relative situation in which we had formerly stood towards each other as private seaman and captain. I would have felt far more at my ease had he treated me in a more distant manner. Frugal as my mode of life was, my cash wore done apace, and I had fixed upon no mode of obtaining a new supply. Once or twice I had made inquiries among the shipping for a situation, without success. Perhaps the fault was my own, as I was rather nice to please, and not over anxious to go to sea if I could do better. I hoped that the captain or his friend would propose something for my advantage; and thus the time had run on, while my lowness of spirits increased upon me. The weather had become wet and foggy. I cared not to leave the house, and remained at home for several days, so depressed that I even wished I were dead, and away from a world in which I had suffered so much. The pleasures I had also enjoyed were entirely blotted out from my recollection. All my life appeared to have been a scene of suffering, with no prospect before me but further misery and endurance.

This was a state of mind that could not long endure without leading to a fatal result. I began to regard suicide as the only remedy for my misery; and even began to look upon it as a crime of no very deep atrocity. Yet, there was a feeling within me that made death as a remedy horrible. At length, by an effort that cost me more to accomplish than anything I had ever done before or since, I shook off this, the darkest moral incubus of the darkest period of my life, and, after an absence of ten days, waited upon Captain H——, to bid him farewell, as I was resolved to leave London, and enter on board the first vessel wherever bound for, and in any capacity I could obtain a berth. When I reached the house I found it shut up, and could obtain no information whither he had gone. All I learned was, that they had left the house three days before, it was believed for the country. I felt indignant and hurt, although I had no reason, at this sudden departure. I had no claim upon him. I had ever been overpaid for any service I had rendered. Still, this was not my feeling at the time; and I bent my steps towards my lodgings in no enviable mood, either with myself or the world. A numbing sensation was upon me. I felt once more alone in the world; and passed through the busy crowds that thronged the streets, almost unconscious of the presence of a human being, until I had reached Tower Hill, when my attention was roused by a crowd of men and boys, who were hooting and jostling an old man of rather respectable appearance, whose impatient anger caused them only to increase their shouts and annoyance. They were calling to him—"Rebel Scot," and "Scottish traitor;" and crying, "Roll him in the kennel," "Duck him in the river." I was in a humour to quarrel with any one, or even dare a host. My blood was on fire in a moment—for the old man upbraided them in Scotch, although tinctured by a foreign accent. He was tall, and had once been a very powerful man. His hat had been knocked off, and his grey hairs were in disorder, save what were retained by a neat cue that bobbed from side to side, as he was pushed, or turned to aim a blow at his cowardly assailants, many of whom, I blush to say, had reached man's estate. In an instant, I was by his side, and shouted, to overtop the noise—

"For shame, to use an old man and a stranger so! Is that like Englishmen?"

For a moment there was a pause; it was but for a moment. My Scotch accent turned them as much against me as him whom I wished to befriend.

"They are both rebel Scots—serve them alike!" shouted a stout young fellow, as he aimed a blow at me. The others joined in the cry. The blow took effect upon the side of my head. I was stunned a little; but returned it with so good effect that he staggered back a pace or two. The blood flowed from my cheek, which was cut, pretty fast. In a moment, the shouting ceased, and "A ring, a ring!" was the cry. "Give the Scotch sailor fair play—he has pluck in him." "Go it Joe!" cried others; and their attention was directed from the old man to me and my opponent. A ring was formed. I gave my jacket and hat to the old man to hold, and to it we went; but, tall as I was and stout, I was forced to give in after a severe contest; my enemy's science prevailed; but my object was attained. The old man and myself were no longer hated. "I was a bit of good stuff," they said, "and had stood well up to fighting Joe of Smithfield." Even Joe said, he would give any one a beating who molested us. We were conducted to a public-house, where I got myself cleaned, and my bruises

dressed. The old gentleman gave me a thousand thanks for the part I had taken in his rescue, and seemed to feel much more for the injuries I had received than I did myself. As soon as we had had some slight refreshment, he caused a coach to be brought, and accompanied me to my lodgings. During our short drive, I learned that he had only arrived from Holland the evening before, and was a stranger in London. He said he had resided for the last ten years there; that he had not been in Scotland for many years; and that he was on his way to it to lay his bones in the graves of his fathers. There was a reservedness of manner that interested me much at the time; and every time I looked to him, I grew the more certain that his face had been familiar to me at some former period of my life. Even his voice fell on my ear like some well-known sound. Neither had we inquired the name of each other. The coach stopped at the door of my lodging, into which he assisted me; and I immediately went to bed at his request, he promising to call upon me in the morning.

After passing a restless night, I was awoke in the morning by my landlady entering my room to inquire if I would see Lieutenant Speare, the old gentleman who had accompanied me home the evening before. Although I felt rather feverish, I replied that I would be glad to see him. In a few minutes, I was astonished to see him enter in an undress, until he informed me that he had been so fortunate as obtain a room from my landlady; and, if I was agreeable, he wished to breakfast along with me and spend the day, as I was not, he felt assured, in a state to leave my room. I did not conceal that I felt very unwell, and would be happy to have his company. After he was seated, I inquired by what accident he had become involved with the rabble upon Tower Hill. After a short pause—

"You and I," replied he, "are countrymen, but strangers to each other. From the disinterested manner in which you interfered in my behalf, I feel that I may trust you with my secret. Even if we differ in opinion, you will not betray me; I therefore shall make no reserve.

"I was born and bred an adherent of the exiled royal family of Great Britain; have bled in their cause; suffered exile from all I held dear; and even now I tread my native land with a halter about my neck, which one word from you might attach to the fatal tree that has ceased to have any horrors for me, were it not for a sacred duty I have to perform before death put a period to my long life of suffering. Yesterday afternoon I had only been a few hours in London, for the first time in my life; yet its gloomy Tower, and blood-drinking Tower Hill, had long been familiar to my mind, as scenes of cruelty and tyranny, where the best blood of Scotland was poured out like water, to satisfy the thirst of a usurper. I had surveyed the scene for some time in silent agony, when my oppressed feelings called before me the heroes, as I had seen and admired them, in manly vigour, struggling in a righteous cause, with the sad termination they experienced, when their headless trunks were insulted by an unfeeling crowd. All caution left me, and I expressed my thoughts aloud. I was overheard and assailed. You delivered me. I acknowledge my imprudence; and, on your account, lament what I have done.

"On my account there is no cause of regret," said I. "I am happy your unguarded language had no more fatal result. Your secret is safe in my keeping. I myself have been a sufferer through that fatal affair, although too young to distinguish between parties; for the miseries of civil war fall heaviest upon the innocent, the females and children. By it I was deprived of both my parents, and thrown destitute upon the world, without friends or home. If the great will struggle, urged by ambition or party zeal, what have the poor to do with their strife, who can, at the best, only change their task-masters? Had my father remained in Edinburgh, my mother had not broken her heart, and I had not been an outcast orphan boy."

"Edinburgh, did you say, young man?" replied he. "Few joined the Prince from that city." His voice faltered; his whole frame shook. He gazed fixedly upon me for a short time; then, starting to his feet, he staggered to my bedside, supporting himself by the bedpost. "What is your name?" he eagerly said.

"John Square," I replied. Uttering a cry that resembled a heavy groan, he sunk upon the bed, and, grasping my hand, bathed it with tears; then, clasping me to his breast, kissed my forehead. His heart was too full to speak; he held me in his embrace, and gazed upon my face. I was so much amazed at the strange conduct of the old man, that it was some time before I recovered from my surprise or could inquire the cause of his, to me, unaccountable proceeding. Still grasping my hand—

"Now, welcome death!" said he. My mission is accomplished. "I shall die in peace. I have found thee, my long forsaken and injured boy." It was now my turn to feel the utmost agitation. Did my father really stand before me. I feared to ask the question, yet burned to do so.

"Are you my father?" cried I.

"Alas! no! I am not your father," said he. "Yet I am all the father you ever knew; and you were, and are dear to me as my own son. Ah, my poor Mary!—she was a kind mother to you. Told she not the secret of your birth before she died?"

"No," was my answer. "I was too young and thoughtless at the time. I recollect she called me to her bedside often, and wept over me; but she only prayed over and blessed me. She sent one of her neighbours, who was very attentive, for the minister to come to her, saying she had something important to entrust him with; but, before he arrived, her mind began to wander, and she remained in that condition until her death, two days after. She had even forgot she had sent for the good man, who, after offering up a prayer, departed." I paused, for the old man wept bitterly while I spake. I did respect his feelings; but my own were too impetuous to be restrained. "Who was my father, since you are not?" cried I. "Is he alive? If you ever loved me, pause not a moment. Nay, I shall tear the secret from you." And I started up in my bed, sore as I was, and looked wildly at him, as he appeared to hesitate.

"Be composed, my dear John," said he. "It is a melancholy tale. I would more willingly spare your feelings then wound them by the relation; but it were cruel now to withhold it from you. You will have no cause to blush for your relatives. My own history is so deeply interwoven with that of your parents, that I cannot disentangle them, and therefore must give them, connected as they are. It was upon the borders of the romantic Esk I first awoke to consciousness, in the hospitable house of your grandfather, to whom my father had been head servant for many years. I was within a few weeks of the same age as John, your father his third son. I was his foster-brother and playfellow, unequal as was our rank. I loved him with more than a brother's love, and would have risked my life for him, had he been in danger. He was my young master; his comfort was all my duty and care; and swiftly the days and hours passed on, until the period arrived that he was to go to Edinburgh to attend the classes at the University, and whither I was to accompany him. We were both young and inexperienced. Your father was of a fearless, open, and generous temper; and his rank in life gave him access to the best society in the city. At one of the assemblies, he became acquainted with a young lady, the orphan daughter of an officer who had fallen in the wars of Marlborough. She resided with two rich maiden aunts, upon whom she depended for her present support and future

fortune. Their intimacy soon ripened, unfortunately, into love. As politics raged at this time with a force and bitterness that divided friends and relations, even the sacred mysteries of love were interrupted by the offerings to the stern genius of discord. Rosie's aunts were rank Whigs, supporters of what were then styled by us the Hanoverian usurpers; and their only surviving brother was an officer high of rank in their armies; while your grandfather was faithful to his lawful king, and as true a Tory as ever lived or bled for the Stewarts. Neither your father nor myself had ever troubled ourselves about the rival factions; yet we were, as we had been bred, stanch adherents to the royal exiles; but love is of no party, and we were both under his influence. From the cause I have mentioned, your father's visits were unacceptable at Rosie's aunt's; their interviews were stolen, and, of course, more sweet. She was at times allowed to walk out for exercise, and to visit, but never unaccompanied by her maid, who had been her servant before her mother's death. She was a bar in my master's way; and, if he dared to converse with his beloved, she would have been kept entirely from his sight. To aid him in his interviews, I became acquainted with Mary, the servant, and was soon as deep in love as my master. Little did our young and joyous hearts dream of the bitter dregs that lay in the cup of pleasure we quaffed in the hours of romance, as we walked, or sat scarce in sight of each other, among the cliffs and sheltered valleys of Arthur Seat. Nothing but my love for your father could have blinded me to the folly he was guilty of, and the ruin that awaited his future prospects in life. As for myself, I could not be other than I was. Mary was of my own rank, born to toil, and with little to lose; while they had a fearful height to fall from, if they wedded without consent of friends. But when, alas! did ever youthful love calculate consequences aright, until the calculation is useless?

"Thus intoxicated with love, the time ran on with unheeded speed; yet my master was unremitting in his studies. He had, with the consent of his father, fixed upon the law as his profession, as the political opinions of the latter gave his son small chance of rising in the army. Rosie and he had often exchanged vows of mutual constancy until more fortunate times for their love should arrive. Your father had pictured to himself speedy success at the bar; and the first use he was to make of his fame was, to claim your mother from her aunts; and, if they refused, as, from the vain efforts he had made to gain their good graces, he had every reason to expect, to wed her without their consent, or one farthing of fortune. His father's consent he knew he could not hope for before the marriage; but his forgiveness afterwards he had no doubt of obtaining. Thus had he lulled himself into a dream of pleasing security, from which he was soon awakened. It was in the beginning of the third session of College, that one of your mother's aunts was taken suddenly ill, and died in a few days, without making any will. Elizabeth, the younger sister, who had never been very kind to Rosie, was now her sole protector; and she, sweet lady, was rendered very unhappy—a circumstance that gave great pain and uneasiness to your father, and was the cause of the imprudent step he took. Scarcely was the funeral over, when Mary, her maid, was discharged, as an unnecessary burden; and, with my master's consent, she and I were married. Aided by his bounty, I began housekeeping, still waiting upon him; and, meanwhile, our house was the scene of the meeting of the lovers. The penury and harshness of her aunt rendered the young lady's life miserable. Her secret was communicated to my wife, who again told my master. This precipitated the consummation of the long courtship. He prevailed upon his beloved to give her consent to a private marriage, that he might have the right to shelter her from suffering longer from her aunt's tyranny. They were privately married in my house, at the head of Mary King's Close.

"Your father had not yet passed as an advocate, and had no means of subsistence save what he got from his father. It was imperative that his marriage should be kept secret from every one. Your mother resided with her aunt only until your father had furnished a small house, near the foot of our close, for his beloved wife—an achievement he could not get accomplished so quickly as he wished, without raising curiosity as to the cause of his repeated demands for money. Nearly four months passed on after the marriage, and your mother still resided with her aunt, who, since her sister's death, had become gay, and had many visiters—principally bachelors—all paying her court, old as she was, for the sake of her wealth; and several of them often paying more attention to the young wife than she wished. Among the visitants was one, a great favourite with the aunt, a retired officer, of an abandoned turn, but connected with some of the oldest families in Scotland. He was well received in most companies, and welcomed for his wit and jovial manner. I recollect I was waiting your father's return from a tavern party, principally young lawyers, before I went to my own house for the night, when he came home much sooner than I had expected, greatly agitated, and in high anger. Alarmed at his unwonted manner, I, with all the humble freedom I could ever use with him, implored him to tell me what had occurred to disturb him so much. After he had become more calm, he told me that Captain Ogilvie had been of the party; that they had drunk pretty freely, and were giving toasts; that the captain pledged Rosie, your mother, and spoke more lightly of her than he could endure to hear; and that a quarrel had ensued, and blows had been struck. He then desired me to see that his rapier was sharp and in order, as he was to meet the captain by five the next morning in the Duke's Walk. My anger against the vile traducer was as great as that of my master. I wished I could meet him in his place—for I had a strong feeling that evil would come out of it; but this was impossible.

"Your father sat down to his writing table, and began two letters—one for his young wife, the other to his father—and, while he was thus employed, I ran home, told Mary not to expect me home that night, and put on a suit of plain clothes. Before he was done, I had his sword and my own in excellent order; for I was as good at fencing as he was, in consequence of having practised with him all the manly exercises he had learned. As soon as he was ready, we began play at the swords, as the captain was an expert swordsman, while my master had had no practice for several years. Thus we passed the night until past four o'clock. When we sallied forth, we called at Blackford's Wynd upon his second, whom we found waiting upon him, and then proceeded by Saint Mary's Wynd Port, and the South Back of the Canongate, to the ground, which we reached a few minutes before the appointed time. The captain and his friend arrived almost as soon as we did. Since then, I have seen blood spilt as freely as water; but never did my heart quail as at this time. In fighting with the blood warm, there is a fierce pleasure; but, to me, nothing is or can be more distressing than to stand an idle spectator and see your friend engaged, and hear the clash and rasp of the weapon aimed at his heart, as if it were your own, and your hands bound. Such were my feelings at this time. The seconds wished to reconcile them; but neither would hear of it. Each drew, and stood on his guard. A fearful pause of a few seconds ensued, while they eyed each other like hungry wolves. My eyes felt as if they would start from their sockets; my breath was suspended; all was still as death; a sudden clang rung on my ears; their swords gleamed in the rays of the rising sun; and so rapid were their movements, that my

eye could not follow them. I saw that the captain, from his fence, was a complete master of his weapon, having practised abroad. My master had been foiled in his favourite assault—the one, indeed, on which I had placed my reliance. A moment's pause ensued; neither had drawn blood. Again they closed, and, after a few unsuccessful attacks, paused again for breath. I saw the blood upon my master's arm, from a slight cut. My hand grasped my sword; but, by a violent effort, I restrained myself. They had been engaged nearly half an hour; my master's hand was dyed in blood; but he was young and alert; while his antagonist was rather corpulent, and his constitution shaken by dissipation. His play became now more feeble and cautious, and my confidence began to revive. He was yet without a scratch; and, collecting all his energies, he made a desperate lounge, which your father only parried so far as to make it pass between his side and the sword-arm, piercing his vest; and the captain lay at his feet transfixed. My heart leaped for joy as I ran to your father's aid. I bound up his arm, while the two seconds attended to the captain. I found my master but slightly hurt. He dispatched me for aid to his antagonist, with which I returned; and, as the captain's wound appeared to be mortal, we left them, and proceeded over the hill. We scarcely exchanged words. Passing up the valley, we stood upon the crest of the height that commanded a view of Craigmillar Castle, and the distant hills, with the level country between. Here we paused; and your father, clasping his hands in agony, gazed around for a few minutes in silence. My own heart was too full to speak, and I stood looking upon his mental suffering; which I knew no mode of soothing, and reverenced too much to interrupt. At length he said, as if unconscious of my presence—"Farewell, sweet scenes of my happiness! my cruel destiny drives me from you, and her who is dearer to me than life; but that thought is distraction. Rose! my beloved Rose! in what a state am I forced to leave you! Alas! I dare not even bid you farewell. My hands are red with blood, and the avengers will soon be on my track; but in defence of your honour it was shed, and Heaven will justify the act. Who now, who will protect you when I am an outlaw?" He dashed his hands upon his forehead, and groaned. I could endure in silence no longer, and at length soothed him into something like composure. It was agreed that he should go to his father, inform him of his duel, and act by his counsel; while I should return to my own house, watch the progress of the captain's wound, and, happen what would, meet him at Roslin Chapel at ten o'clock in the evening, to consult what was farther to be done. We parted at St Leonard's Hill.

"In the forenoon, nothing was talked of in the city but Captain Ogilvie's duel; and it had become a party question. The Whigs had one version of the cause of quarrel, the Tories another. I gave no ear to either; but was rejoiced to learn that the captain was not dead, although his life was despaired of.

"It was now past six o'clock—the quarter had chimed upon the clock of St Giles. I had my hand on the latch to go once more to the captain's, to know how he continued since my last inquiry, when the rasp was gently moved. I opened the door, and your mother staggered into my arms, pale as death, and swooned away. With difficulty, Mary and I restored her to consciousness. I told her of your father's safety; and she replied, that she was now, save for her husband, a destitute outcast; that her aunt, who only waited a pretext, had turned her out upon the world; and that the cause of her expulsion was her conduct in being the cause of her aunt's favourite, Captain Ogilvie's death. I told her that the captain was not yet dead, and would, I hoped, survive; and, leaving her in charge of Mary, I hurried to ascertain what ground there was for my hope. I found that the captain was still alive, but that his death was hourly expected.

"With a sorrowful heart, I hurried out by Bristo Port, after getting the word for the night from the keeper, that I might be admitted, on my return, into the city. I was at the chapel some time before ten o'clock, and found my master waiting for me. When I told him that the captain was still in life, he took my hand—'Square,' he said, 'this has been a sad and dreary day to me. It is a fearful thing to have blood upon our hands, even in a just cause. I pray with my whole soul he may recover, both for his own sake and mine.'

"I then told him what had befallen your mother.

"'I am happy it is so,' he said. 'I shall leave her under the keeping of Mary and you with more confidence than I could in her aunt's. My mind is relieved of a burden; my greatest difficulty was how to dispose of my beloved, until my return; for, by the command of my father, I set off for France to-morrow—to St Germains, where I will remain until this untoward affair blows over. If all go as we anticipate, you will, perhaps, see me here sooner than you expect—ay, with a gallant band of patriots, to redress Scotland's wrongs, and restore our rightful Prince. My father is not displeased at my conduct—would that he knew the right I had to take my Rosie's part! But the time will come. As I know not how soon the officers of justice may be in quest of me, I must depart to-morrow morning for England, on my way to France. I must therefore see Rosie, to bid her good-bye for a short season. I shall be waiting for her near St Anthony's Chapel, to weep our parting, where we have so often smiled at our meetings. O, William, William! these thoughts unman me.'

"'My dear master,' said I, 'am I to accompany you?'

"'No, William,' replied he—'No; I leave my beloved wife to your care until my return, when I will requite you as she shall report of you.'

"It was early in the morning before I reached Edinburgh. I found your mother and Mary still out of bed, awaiting my return. The night was spent in tears by the females, and a melancholy presentiment was on my own heart. Before we set out to meet the fugitive, I caused them to disguise themselves—your mother having my wife's maud, and she a dress she had never before worn. They proceeded down the street by themselves, while I went to inquire how the captain had spent the night. I found he was still in life, but no hopes were entertained of his recovery.

"The shades of evening were beginning to fall before this last and sorrowful parting terminated. They never met again. Your mother, who was in the family way, although we knew not the fact for weeks afterwards, began to droop and pine—a sadness of heart seemed to consume her; in vain we strove to cheer her gloom; and her aunt made no inquiries after her. Once a-week I visited the banks of the Esk to inquire after my master; and occasionally got accounts of his welfare; but they were few and far between—only, indeed, when the letters could be forwarded by some one coming to Scotland. No letter had as yet come to me for his wife. How often have I left her, with a faint smile of hope dispelling the habitual sadness of her lovely countenance, and returned with an aching heart to witness her increased melancholy. Your father had left her all the gold he could, even more than he could spare; yet we would have given it all for a single letter from his hand; but none came. Meanwhile, Captain Ogilvie, who continued long in a precarious state, ultimately recovered.

'At length you were born; but your unfortunate mother did not survive many days; and scarcely was the sod green on her grave, when my master came back to Scotland. His grief his agony, I shall not attempt to describe. In

few weeks after, he returned to France, for his native country was hateful to him; and I would have accompanied him, but that Mary was in delicate health, and I could not leave her. As his father was displeased at him for relinquishing his study of the law, he gave him only a small sum to maintain him in France. You passed, meanwhile, as my own child, and went under my name.

"At length the long-expected deliverer came. I concealed the certificate of your father's marriage, and some other papers, in the wainscot of our room, and would have joined my master in the north; but, as the party were in rapid advance to Edinburgh, I thought I could be of more service to the cause in Edinburgh. It was I who contrived the way, and caused the easy entry of the Prince into the city, by the Netherbow Port. The gentleman you saw once or twice in conversation with Mary, whom you took for your mother, was your father; but it was not thought prudent to undeceive you. We had the greatest confidence in the success of our righteous cause. Alas! we were prosperous for a time, only to feel more bitterly our reverse. We advanced into England, elate with the victory of Tranent, where we scattered the red coats like frightened deer. I had no opportunity of visiting Edinburgh again, until it would have been death for me to dare the act. Your father was wounded at the battle of Falkirk, and required my utmost care. After the Prince retired from the siege of Stirling, and Cumberland's arrival in the north, our affairs began to wear a different aspect. Carlisle had been recaptured, and our success seemed farther from us than at the commencement. My master's wound was, by good management, so much better that he could travel by easy stages. The volunteers, and adherents of the Hanoverians, were beginning to shew more bravery, by apprehending all whom they knew belonged to the Prince; so that, without taking leave, we left our landlord in the night; and, crossing at Kincardine, got into Fife, and travelled down the shores of the Forth until we reached Dysart, where your father was confined to bed, by fever, for some days. Here we received the heart-breaking intelligence of Culloden Field, and the massacre of the friends of royalty. Scotland was no longer a country for us. My master had acted too open and conspicuous a part to hope for pardon. I would, perhaps, on Mary's account and yours, have ventured my life in a return to Edinburgh; but I could not leave your father in his present situation. As yet, no one suspected we had belonged to the Highland army; for I had so adroitly concealed my master's wound, that he was thought to be only sick of a fever. Fortunately, there was a vessel about to sail for Rotterdam. We embarked for Holland without interruption; and arrived safe. During your father's convalescence we were reduced to great straits; for our supply of cash was, when we left Scotland, much reduced, and here it entirely failed. My master had written to his brother for a supply; but he had found it for his advantage to change sides; and, so far from sending a remittance, he never answered one of his letters. Had it not been for the disinterested aid of a Scotch merchant, who was established in the place of our retreat, and who had been a college friend of your father, we must have been reduced to absolute want. Through his influence, he obtained for him a commission in the Scotch Brigade, then in the service of the States; and thus relieved him from the humiliation of dependence; but this was not accomplished until nearly the end of the second year after I had left my peaceful home. During all this time, we were in the greatest anxiety—he about his son, I about my dear wife. Yet we had no means of ascertaining your fates; and the consciousness of the poverty you must be plunged in, embittered all our thoughts. As soon as my master joined the division of the brigade, which was quartered in Bergen-op-Zoom, he borrowed a sum of money for my use. At all hazards, I had resolved to return to Edinburgh, use all the precaution I could to avoid being recognised, and bring over with me to Holland you and my dear Mary.

"All being prepared, I bade adieu to your father, and embarked, in the dress of a Dutch skipper, on board of a vessel bound for Dysart, principally loaded with old iron, for the nailers of Pathhead. She was a Fife vessel; and the captain knew me only as William Speare, a Dutchman. Upon our arrival, I crossed, with the first Kinghorn boat, for Leith, and hurried up to Edinburgh. Our passage across the Frith had been very tedious; and the shades of evening were just coming on when I reached the Abbey Hill. With a heart equally divided between hope and fear, I walked up the Canongate, through the Netherbow Port, and up the High Street. I saw many that I had known in happier days, and my heart yearned to address them; but, alas! I was a proscribed outlaw, shut out from the society I loved. When I reached Mary King's Close, my heart beat so ardently, that I was forced to pause for breath as I climbed the stair to my old door. I took the rasp in my hand, and gave my wonted tirl. A female opened the door, about the same height of her I loved. It was very dusky. That it was my wife I had no doubt. I threw my arms around her, crying—'Dear Mary!' The female pushed me from her, and screamed out for help. I thought I would have sunk to the ground, and leaned against the door for support. An elderly female came in haste with a light. I attempted to speak, but could only sob, and felt sick almost to death. The women looked upon me in amazement; for the tears were silently stealing down my face. After whispering a few words, I was kindly invited into the house, which I had expected to have been my own. It was tidily furnished; but everything in it was strange to me, and wore a look of desolation and loneliness. Neither my wife nor you were there. Not to betray myself, I told them that I had not been in Edinburgh for a long time; but that, when I left it last, a very dear friend had resided there, whom I had hoped to find where I left her, and that my mistake must plead my excuse for any apparent rudeness. Their answers to my inquiries crushed all my hopes. Mary was in her silent grave; and you had disappeared. Nothing now remained to me in Scotland that I cared for; and, after in vain offering a reward to any one who could give any information concerning you, and shedding a few tears over the grave of my wife, I returned to Holland with my sorrowful intelligence. Your father, quite sunk with your uncertain fate, fell into a lowness of spirits that preyed upon his health, and continually reflected upon himself as the cause of your mother's early death, and your destitution.

"As the monotony and dulness of garrison duty in a strongly-fortified town, served to increase his melancholy, which threatened to merge into consumption, he, by the advice of his physician—that change of scene, and a warm climate, might remove all the bad symptoms he exhibited—exchanged into a regiment stationed in the island of Ceylon, into which I also enlisted, that I might accompany him. There was, alas! no other individual on earth for whom I cared. Far from recovering on the voyage, its tedious dulness sunk him more and more into his habitual lowness of spirits; and on our arrival on the island, he grew worse, and did not survive many months. I buried him at Trincomalee. Alas! how true is the saying, that "all men know where they were born; but none where they shall lay their bones."

So intense had been the interest I felt in his narrative, that I scarcely moved, least I should lose a word, or interrupt him. He paused at this event, and wiped a tear from his eyes. William and Mary I had until this hour looked upon as my real parents. For those I now heard of, I

and new feelings to acquire. I noticed that he did not tell me the surname of my parents, and I pressed not the question. All that I asked of him was to continue his history, and inform me what had induced him once more to return to Scotland.

"Can a Scotsman ask that question of a Scotsman?" said he. "In whatever part of the globe he may be, the hope to lay his bones with his fathers is the Polar star that cheers his wanderings, be they prosperous or adverse. Remove this hope, and his energies from that moment sink, for he has lost all of life worth caring for. I have both known and felt it. But to proceed:—

"After your father's death, I felt the most solitary of men for many months. Still I continued to do my duty as a private soldier, without taking any interest in surrounding events. About two years after my arrival, a revolt broke out in the colony: the Singaleese were aided by the Candians from the mountains; and the handful of Europeans could scarce make head against the multitudes of the natives, who had courage and ferocity more than sufficient to have exterminated us every man; but, fortunately for us, they had no discipline or other mode of warfare, but to rush on their enemy and overpower them. This they found to be a vain attempt; yet they never changed their mode until compelled to sue for peace, by the immense slaughter made of them in this war of carnage and massacre. I had been several times the decided cause of victory to the Dutch, in preventing small detachments from being cut off, and directing the movements of the main body; for which services I was promoted to a lieutenancy. I never rose higher, nor do I believe I would have attained this rank, had it not been to enable me to take command of small parties, for which I was qualified from my being ever on the outskirts of the army, or in the borders of the jungle. Great numbers of my men died through fatigue and fever. I, myself, for several years, remained robust; but my turn came at length. I fevered and relapsed; several times my life was despaired of for whole weeks; and many wounds, I had received from the Candian spears and arrows, broke out afresh, and baffled the power of medicine. My constitution triumphed over my malady; but I was unfit for service. I have one wound here, on my side, that is hurrying me to my grave; which, I hope, will be in Pennycuick churchyard. But, now that I have the happiness to find my long-lost charge, there is one more duty for me to perform when we reach Edinburgh, whither you must return with me to consign me to the dust. That duty I never did expect to be called to perform—it is to repossess myself of the certificates of your father's marriage, and your baptism, which are, as I told you, concealed behind the wainscot in the house in Mary King's Close. I trust, for your sake, they are still safe, and may be the means of placing you in your proper rank in society."

"Dear father," I replied—"for I must still call you so—if it is to be of any service to me alone, it is of no avail to proceed further on that errand, for fortune baffles all my undertakings, and I tell you you will not succeed; still I have no objection to return with you to Scotland, although my present object in London was to go to sea in a vessel bound for the Indian seas—the only place of all I ever visited where fortune smiled upon me, and I scorned her favours."

After dinner I gave the lieutenant an outline of my adventures since he had left Edinburgh, at which he was much moved. When I told him of the obligation I lay under to the worthy lawyer—

"Ah, Johnnie!" said he, "we have already half-gained the victory. Mr Davidson was at college, and intimate with your father, and he knows me well as your father's servant. Scotland does not contain a better man for our purpose. I shall fee him liberally, and fortune may yet smile upon us." It was now late in the evening, and the lieutenant left me for the night.

Scarce was he gone, when a new passion took entire possession of me—that of pride and ambition. I felt myself quite changed, and strange visions of imaginary importance floated before me. My present finances were now deemed low enough—eleven guineas—which at one period I would have considered an immense sum. So sanguine had a few hours made me, that I looked upon it only as so many pence. From this period I date a complete revolution in my train of thoughts. Formerly I had cared but for the passing hour, nor heeded for to-morrow. My early education had, until now, clung to me in all my vicissitudes, being ever the outcast orphan boy, who, his belly full and his back warm, had nothing further to obtain. My contentment was now gone. But to proceed:—

For a few days I was forced to keep at home, until the marks of my Tower Hill affray had disappeared; during which, urged by my new passion, pride, I got myself equipped in the extreme of fashion. I now smile at my folly, when I look back to these few weeks in which I was swayed by it. But no young lady, getting her first ball dress, was ever more fidgety or hard to please than John Square. The lieutenant was pleased to see me ape the gentleman; for he really looked upon me as such, and paid me every deference, as the son of his master. The money he had saved while in Ceylon he counted as mutual; nor would he allow me to expend one farthing of my own. We both were now anxious to proceed to Edinburgh, and embarked in the first trader bound for Leith. This voyage was the most pleasant I had ever made; I was in Fairyland, and the lieutenant not far behind me.

When we were landed, with the earliest convenience we proceeded to Edinburgh, with far different feelings from any I had before experienced. Having arrived in the evening, it was next morning, after an early breakfast, that we proceeded from our inn in the Canongate towards the Cross, to reconnoitre the old domicile of William Square, the house in which I had first drawn breath. You may judge our horror, surprise, and grief—I cannot describe it—that loved edifice had disappeared from the earth; it no longer existed. Where it had once stood, new walls were shooting up towards the firmament. It, and many others, had been swept away, to make room for the site of the present Royal Exchange. A feeling of desolation, bordering on despair, took possession of my heart. The lieutenant, uttering a groan, wrung his hands, and looked upon me with a gaze that pierced me to the soul. I felt his frame leaning upon me with the weight of death. He would have sunk to the ground, had I not supported him. With difficulty I conveyed him into Corbet's tavern, under the Piazzas, where, after a time, he recovered, only to give vent to a burst of anguish.

"Ill-fated parent and ill-fated child!" he cried; "it was not that my heart yearned not to tell you the family from whence you sprung, but a presentiment hung heavy upon my mind that there was evil still in store for you. Alas, my poor John! are you really doomed to dree the weird assigned your forebears. Your father's father was Mr William —— of ——. Can it be possible that these canting Whigamores have the spirit of prophecy? This almost forces me to think they had—

> "'For saints' blood and saints harried,
> The third generation will ne'er inherit.'

It is too true, too true!"

These last sentences he repeated to himself several times as if unconsciously, and again sunk back upon his chair in a state of stupor; nor could I rouse him by all the gentle methods I could use. At length I called a sedan chair,

and had him conveyed to the inn and put to bed. He seemed quite unconscious and passive, until, disturbed by our moving him into bed, when, as if mechanically, he again said—

"'For saints' blood and saints harfied,
The third generation shall ne'er inherit.'

My poor boy! my poor boy!"

At this time a physician arrived, and having administered the remedies he thought most efficacious in my foster-parent's case, was about to retire, when I inquired if he thought there was any immediate danger. He candidly said he thought there was; for the patient's constitution was much reduced, and he had received some violent shock, which might dash out the remaining grains from the nearly exhausted glass. He advised that he should not be left alone for any time; and, above all, that he must be kept quiet, until he called again in the afternoon.

As soon as I had recovered myself a little from the agitation this untoward event had produced, I wrote a note to Mr Davidson, requesting he would be so kind as call upon me as soon as convenient, stating that I had urgent business to consult him upon, and pleading, as my excuse for putting him to the trouble, the sudden illness of a friend. When the cadie was sent off with my card, I began to ruminate upon my prospects, which again had been so suddenly overcast. He on whom my sole dependence was placed, lay in the room, where I sat in a state of prostration, bordering almost upon unconsciousness. The visions of pride and consequence in which I had indulged, from the time I first heard of my gentle forefathers, began to fade from before me; a short time of sad and melancholy reasoning on probabilities had swept them away as completely as the innovating hands of the good citizens had removed the old tenement in which the testimonials of their reality had been concealed. In the midst of these reflections, the lawyer arrived. His astonishment at seeing me was equalled by my joy at meeting with one in whose judgment and shrewdness I had the utmost confidence. The sight of him renewed my hopes; and the fond clinging to self-importance, so natural, yet so foolish, when it is derived from no merit or endeavour of the individual, again returned upon me.

After mutual congratulations, we at once proceeded to business. After stating my arrival in London, and strange meeting with the lieutenant, I narrated the melancholy fate of my parents. He heard me to the end, with all the imperturbability of a man of business; yet his countenance betrayed the interest he took in my recital. When I concluded, he rose to his feet; and, placing his hands behind his back, moved quickly, two or three times, across the room, then stopped at the side of the bed where the lieutenant lay; and, after gazing for a short time upon his altered countenance, turned to me, and gave his head an ominous shake.

"Mr Square," said he, "this is a strange business. I myself have not a doubt of the truth of all the circumstances, some of which I have a distinct recollection of—more especially the quarrel and duel; but how to obtain the necessary evidence, I at present cannot divine. The loss of the papers is a very material point; and the sudden illness of your foster-parent is very unfortunate. But there is also another difficulty—even were we so fortunate, as I hope we will be, as to restore him to health and consciousness: his testimony could not be taken in any court of justice; he is an outlaw, tainted by actual rebellion, and liable to be apprehended and executed as a traitor. His mildest punishment, if not pardoned after sentence, would be banishment; and what is not the least worthy of serious consideration, the object to be attained, unless your friend is very rich, may not be worth the expense and trouble. That foolish rhyme has been fulfilled, in the meantime, so far. Your great-grandfather was a zealous partisan of the Lauderdale administration in Scotland; and, I believe, rather rigorous with the adherents of the Covenant. At the Revolution, he fell into disgrace with the powers that assumed the reigns of government, and so turned his hopes upon the restoration of the exiled family, and impoverised himself in aiding the intrigues to restore them. Your grandfather had been bred in, and adhered to the same politics, now a losing game. He still farther reduced the rent-roll by sales and bonds; and, at his death, your two uncles, who remained at home, changed their party. The older died young, without having married; and the younger succeeded to what remained of the estate of his ancestors—a mere wreck, soon spent in dissipation, Not one furr of land that once owned your ancestors as lord, now owns their sway. With the sum produced by the last sale, your uncle bade adieu to Scotland; and you are the last of the race. I would advise no farther proceedings than to endeavour, if possible, to recover the documents relating to your birth and legitimacy, if they have not been destroyed in pulling down the old walls."

Why should I dwell on my disappointment. Mr Davidson used every effort, by inquiries and offers of reward; but the papers never were recovered, although we got from one of the workmen the brass Dutch box in which they had been placed. He had purchased it from one of the labourers who picked it up in the ruins, and had destroyed the papers as of no importance. I had now the knowledge of the family from whom I was descended, but no proof to establish my claim, even though my right to property, to any amount, would have been the consequence.

As for my foster-parent, he gradually recovered from the stupor that had overwhelmed him, but never recovered his wonted energies. He was possessed of a few hundred pounds, besides his half-pay from the Dutch government, which was regularly paid. He never could endure me for any length of time out of his sight; and I remained with him until his death, a few years afterwards. I knew that I was wasting my time; yet I could not desert the old man, whose whole happiness was concentrated in me; and, shall I confess, I felt a strange happiness in his society—for he alone, of all mankind, treated the beggar-boy of former years as an individual of rank, and our conversation was generally about the traditions of my ancestors. When the weather would permit, it was our wont to leave our house at Clock Mill, to wander over the scenes he loved—the spots in and around the bosom of Arthur Seat, where he had first won the affections of his departed Mary—and point out the favourite haunts which my father and mother used to sit in or walk. On these we would gaze, until our imaginations seemed vested with the power of calling the personages before us. Thus passed on the time until the lieutenant's death, which happened suddenly.

I was thus once more alone in the world, without a tie to bind me to it, save the natural love of life inherent in man. In Edinburgh I had formed no acquaintance; a continual soreness haunted me as to the dignity of birth, yet I never assumed even the name of my parent. I only heard it pronounced by my foster-father, who urged me to adopt my family honours. The conversation of the lieutenant had given my mind a military bias. I was weary of Edinburgh, which recalled to my mind too many sad reflections; and I mentioned to Mr Davidson the resolution I had formed. After winding up the affairs of the lieutenant, I found that I was possessed of one hundred and seventy pounds. Mr Davidson, who still insisted that the money I had left as a gift in his hands, was at my disposal, generously offered to advance the amount required to purchase me an ensigncy; but this I would on no account allow. My pride revolted at a pecuniary obligation, as a

derogation from my family dignity, which still hung heavy upon me. By his advice, and through his assistance, I sunk in the hands of the magistrates one hundred and fifty pounds, as the most profitable way I could invest it—the interest to accumulate until my return in person to claim it. It was about the year 1775, when the troubles in America had commenced. Accounts had just arrived that blood had been shed at Lexington and Concord; and the bootless victory at Boston was announced, but not confirmed. It was the month of August, and the utmost excitement reigned among the people in the city; every means, both legal and scarcely legal, being employed to raise troops. The comprehending act was passed, by which the justices of the peace were empowered to impress and send to the army all idle or immoral characters; an engine of great tyranny and oppression in their hands; for every person who was in the least obnoxious to them was hurried to the army, whatever his character might be. Without informing my friend, Mr Davidson, I bade him farewell, and proceeded to Glasgow, where I entered as a private into the Frazer Highlanders, resolved to carve out my own fortune with my sword. This I did through my foolish pride, so little had I learned by my former experience. During my short stay with the party, before I joined the regiment, my mind became disgusted by the modes I saw practised to augment the army, by trepanning and actual violence. The landed gentlemen and magistrates appeared to have lost, in their zeal, every sense of justice. The most disgusting modes were resorted to; such as putting a shilling into a drinking jug, and causing the king's health to be pledged; while the soldier, in plain clothes, sitting in company as a tradesman, or a person from the country, was ready to seize the person, whom he had pitched upon, the moment he drank the royal toast. If he resisted, nothing could save him from prison; enlist and attest he must. So prevalent, indeed, was this mode, that the publicans were under the necessity of getting pewter jugs, with glass bottoms, to drink from, or their houses would have been deserted. This gave security to the customer that there was not a shilling in the bottom; and allowed him to watch through the glass the motions of the persons with whom he drank. The only redress the kidnapped individual got was, that he might choose the regiment he would join; and he, in general, fixed upon some other than the one to which his betrayer belonged. One instance disgusted me beyond endurance. It happened to a good-looking young lad, belonging to Hamilton. An intimate acquaintance of his had been enlisted, whether voluntarily or not I do not recollect, but he was still without any marks of his new profession. Several of the old soldiers were also with him, prowling about for recruits, when he recognised his former friend in the Briggate, accompanied by his intended bride and their mothers, who had come to Glasgow with the young people to purchase their plenishing. Rejoiced to meet an old acquaintance in the city, the party, being fatigued with their walk and the heat of the weather, retired to a neighbouring public-house to rest and refresh themselves. The companions of the betrayer, to avoid suspicion, had passed on, as if they were not of his party, but entered the house a short time after. As those from the country had business to transact, they refused to tarry, and the new-made soldier insisted to pay for the entertainment, which, after a good-natured dispute, he was allowed to do. By design, or otherways, he sat at the far end of the table, and when the landlady was called, he said, handing forward a shilling—

"Here, George, is a shilling; be so good as hand it to the landlady."

"The reckoning is one and sixpence," said she.

"Oh. I have plenty of the king's coin. Here is another for you, George."

To the alarm and grief of the bridal party, when they were at the door to proceed on the business they had come to town upon, the soldiers in waiting seized the young man, and declared him one of the king's men. The betrayer shrunk back, not yet hardened to the trade; but his associates compelled the victim to go with them to the jail. Fortunately for them and the young man, they had respectable friends in the city, who waited upon some of the magistrates. An investigation took place. The soldiers scrupled not to maintain that he was enlisted, and were willing to swear that he had taken the second shilling in the king's name—the usual words of voluntary enlistment. They even produced the landlady, who, either leaning towards the soldiers, (her good customers,) or not paying much attention at the time, declared that she heard, when the second shilling was given, the words, distinctly, "king and coin." So powerful was the feeling at this time, that he was declared duly enlisted, and only escaped by paying to the party a round sum of smart money.

After passing the winter at drill, I was embarked with a numerous body, to reinforce the army besieged in Quebec, where we arrived in the month of May. I was now on the field where I was to reap the fruits of my ambition; but I found it unpromising, and strewed with thorns. Still I had an object to obtain, however distant it might be, and my oppression left me. I was most assiduous in my duties, and was soon made a corporal. My heart leaped for joy. This was the first step to my ambition; my hopes began to brighten, and I submitted to our privations without a murmur. At the storming of Saint John's, I was made a sergeant; and here I stuck. In vain was all my daring and good conduct. At the descent upon Long Island, I was as conspicuous as I dared to be by the rules of strict discipline; and, in consequence, often had the charge of small picquets upon dangerous service, and was twice slightly wounded. Once I led the company, and took several prisoners after both the captain and ensign were carried to the rear dangerously wounded. The ensign died in a few days of his wound; and, it was generally believed by the men of the regiment that I would have been promoted to his rank. At length, in the month of August 1781, I was made paymaster sergeant; which rank I did not long retain; for the army was, not long after, completely surrounded by the Americans, besieged in Yorktown and at Gloucester, and, after suffering the extreme of hardships for twelve days, from sickness, famine, and the fire of the enemy, Lord Cornwallis, hopeless of being relieved, surrendered himself and army prisoners of war. This put an extinguisher upon all my hopes. I was now a prisoner, sick, and looked upon for death, and must have perished had it not been for one of the captains of the American army, to whom the sick prisoners were delivered over. He proved to have been one of the palantines—an Aberdeen lad—who had been my companion in early misfortune, now an extensive proprietor in New England. To him I was indebted for much kindness during my imprisonment until the peace. When I returned to Britain, I was discharged with a pension of one shilling per day, being what is called the king's letter, which, with the accumulation of my annuity, enables me to finish my checkered career in competence, and wander as I list amidst these scenes of wo and pleasure, lovely by nature, and endeared by former recollections.

WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE ECONOMIST.

That the last war produced an important change both upon the appearance of the country and the habits and manners of its inhabitants, is a point which can now hardly be disputed. With respect to the former, the demand for agricultural produce, which was occasioned by the victualling of fleets, the storing of garrisons, and the supplying of armies, enhanced the price—the traffic became a highly lucrative concern to people of various grades; and, as a natural consequence, the cultivators of the soil became anxious to produce as much as possible. *Commons*, where only a few sheep were wont to pick a scanty subsistence, were divided and improved. *Marshes*, which were in no respect serviceable, except as a home and a haunt for that most indescribable personage, Will-o'-the-Wisp, were drained and made to produce food for thousands. Even the *moss*, which was long supposed to be irreclaimable, and which contained so many "Sloughs of Despond" that had any "pilgrim," less persevering than *John Bunyan's*, attempted to wade through the half of them, his "progress" had certainly been short, and his end an untimely one—even the moss was at last thought of as a profitable speculation.

While these changes on the face of the country were effecting, others equally striking among its inhabitants were going on. The rise in the price of agricultural produce was immediately followed by a rise in the rent of land, which brought more money into the hands of the landlords than they had previously been accustomed to receive; and this at once enabled them to follow their various inclinations, and prosecute their favourite schemes more decidedly than they had hitherto done.

Glancing at the other classes of society, the improvements which were going on had greatly increased the demand for labour; while the thousands on thousands of individuals who were every year drained out of the country, to supply the army with recruits, had considerably diminished the number of labourers. An unprecedented rise of wages followed this combination of favourable circumstances; and, as a natural result of their increased resources, a marked difference in the dress and general appearance of the labouring population soon began to be manifest. The youngster laid aside the broad blue bonnet, which, from boyhood, had served him in the capacity of *head-gear*, and the *justycoat*, the *wyliecoat*, and the *breeks* of hodden-grey, which hitherto had protected the remaining parts of his person, for a hat, and a dress of finer material and more fashionable make. In short, *plaiding hose* were completely subverted by stockings, *beavers* superseded bonnets, and broad cloth took the place of homespun.

In the little country parish of Strathendern, these changes soon began to appear. On the Winkleburn estate, most of the leases had expired several years ago; and old Mr Winkle, the laird, had let the greater part of his farms at nearly double the rent which they formerly brought. The ruling passion of this individual, was a love of money, founded upon a wish to extend the boundaries of his property. This passion had been called into extraordinary activity by the increased means which he now possessed of gratifying it. His servants were oppressed and his tenants were fleeced in the most merciless manner; and, in short, there was no plan by which he could gain or save a shilling which he did not pursue. In one respect, however, he was liberal, and that was the education of his son—to complete which, he had sent him to one of the universities of the sister kingdom; where, he hoped, by being permitted to mingle with the sons of the nobility, his heir would soon become a more perfect gentleman than most of the Scottish proprietors of land at that time could pretend to be. How far these hopes were likely to be realized was not then exactly known, as the young aristocrat was only permitted to spend a very short period annually at Winkleburn. But, while some elderly people, who had acquired a sort of fame for their penetration, said that "he had learned some things of which they did not know the use;" his father's servants, and more particularly the female part of them, declared that "he had learned others which he would have been better without."

The extravagance and bad management of Andrew Scattermites, Esq., of Daidlebank, whose estate lay contiguous to his own, was, with Mr Winkle, supposed to be a powerful motive for training up his son in the manner just noticed. There were few who doubted of Mr Scattermites being in a fair way for getting quit of his fortune at one time or other; and Mr Winkle, who was adding shilling to shilling, and pound to pound, as fast as he possibly could, already looked upon his son as the future laird of both Daidlebank and Winkleburn; and to prepare him for this exalted station, he was careful, as has been just hinted, by giving him a befitting education.

Having settled these preliminary matters, the reader must now be pleased to go back a little for the beginning of our story. Previous to the commencement of the war on the estate of Daidlebank, and not very far distant from the house, there stood, where it still stands, the little hamlet of Heatherbraes, in which lived a number of poor people, most of whom had been *relieved* if not benefited by the indiscriminating charity of the laird. Among these there was Robert Winterton, who, though himself an industrious man, with only one child to provide for, had passed the greater part of his married life in extreme poverty, which was in a great measure owing to the mismanagement of his wife.

Some there were, however, who rejected aid; and the effects of their independence were exemplified in the case of Daniel Forbes, who, while the rest of the hamlet were continually gaping for a supply of provisions, or old clothes, or some other charity, from "the Big House," could never be prevailed upon to accept of anything beyond his own lawful earnings. His family was numerous; but they were taught to be industrious almost from infancy; they were always well dressed for their station, and they never wanted a plentiful supply of provisions; and the common wonder was, how their father could find money to keep and educate them as he did. About this time Robert Winterton and his wife both died; leaving a son, George—who was then about fourteen years of age—and who, owing to the carelessness of his mother, had never been a single hour at a school; nor had he, as yet, been put to any

regular employment. He seemed, however, to possess all the good qualities of one parent, and scarcely any of the bad ones of the other. He was always ready to assist any one to whom his assistance could be of the least service; he always seemed pleased when he had reason to suppose that his little labours had given satisfaction; while his modesty was such, that he never either spoke or thought of them afterwards as deserving praise. But, docile and quiet as the lad had certainly been, when his veracity was impeached, or when he was falsely accused of some misdemeanour, though he seldom spoke, his young cheek would redden, and his boyish eye sparkle with indignation—thus shewing that he possessed a considerable share of that "noble feeling misnamed *pride*," which appears to be indispensable as a guard against meanness of conduct, and without which, it may be safely affirmed, few have ever risen to eminence, or even ordinary respectability.

With all these amiable qualities, how he was to be provided for in future was a question not very easily answered. A sort of common council was held, at which some said "he should try the sea;" others, that "he should enlist as a soldier, and seek fame and fortune abroad;" while a third party affirmed that "Mr Exodus, the minister, would do something for him, if he were only made acquainted with the case;" but, after the whole of these proposals had been heard and commented on, the only resolution upon which they could agree was, "to see what Daniel Forbes would say before taking any decisive step." One of their number, accordingly, went with the poor boy to the house of the last mentioned individual, and met, as had been expected, with a kind reception.

"Unco richt," said Daniel, after being apprised of the object of the visit. "Just leave the laddie wi' me. He'll get his supper here, an' his bed, if he likes; an' I'll try to think aboot his case i' the e'enin."

Having thus dismissed his other visiter, between that and supper-time he endeavoured to cheer and reassure the drooping spirits of the boy, by telling him of individuals who, when young, had been left destitute and friendless; and yet, in after life, had risen to eminence in their various professions, and even to affluence, by their own honest exertions. When the evening meal was over, taking him by the hand, and leading him into a separate apartment—

"George," said he, speaking his best English, and assuming, at the same time, a graver tone than he had yet used, "I would willingly assist you with food, clothing, and lodging, or anything else which my house could afford, did I not believe that it may be in my power to make you a far better and a far happier man, by teaching you how to provide these things for yourself."

The boy attempted no reply; but, on hearing these words, his eye brightened, and he listened with ardent expectation for what was to follow.

"Self-dependence," continued Daniel, "is a virtue from which, if we depart but for a moment, we depart, at the same time, from happiness; and, young as you are, I would have your mind impressed with a just sense of its importance. You are not yet able for hard labour, but you may earn something; and, if your earnings should be small, your *real* wants are also comparatively few. By and by, I will endeavour to point out a way in which, I think, you may be independent; but, first, I must warn you of some dangers which lie in the path of youth. When you get acquainted with the world, you will find, among masters and fellow-labourers, some who will abuse you, and treat you harshly, and others who will praise you far beyond your deserts, to make you perform more work; but you must be on your guard against both; and, if you never over-work yourself, to avoid a little undeserved censure, or to obtain a little unmeaning applause, you will never be under the necessity of relaxing into idleness to recover strength. At first, you must only think of persevering patiently at the task which is assigned you—performing it as well as you possibly can, and as soon as is consistent with your ability. You must also be satisfied to wait for that vigour and firmness of nerve, which years will soon bestow, to enable you to perform those little exploits and rustic feats which excite popular admiration—indeed, it were better if you should never attempt them at all. By observing these simple rules, though you may not obtain much direct praise, you will, in time, acquire a character for steadiness, which is of the utmost importance to every one—but to none more than the young. Never attempt to pry into the secrets of others, but rather try to keep your own; and, when they are of importance, let them, if possible, be kept so close that none shall suspect you have any to keep. When you come to have money to spare, which, if you are industrious, will soon be the case, neither throw it away upon snuff nor tobacco, nor intoxicating liquor, though you will find thousands who will tempt you to do these things, but take care of it; for, whatever may be said to the contrary, you will find it an article without which it is impossible either to get on in the world or to get honestly through it. Whatever your means may be, always take care to have your expenses so regulated as that they may be something less. And now," he continued, after a short pause, during which he took down a small book from a shelf, "I will shew you the manner in which I conduct my own little establishment. Upon one of these pages I keep an accurate account of my *income*, and upon the other I do the same with my *expenditure*. By referring to this register, I can at any time see how matters stand; and our concerns are so managed, that we have always enough for the necessaries of life, and something over for a rainy day. Some such plan as this you must adopt as soon as possible; but, I had forgot—you cannot write, I believe?"

The boy assented, with a degree of sadness in his look which told how deeply he felt his inferiority in this respect.

"Well," continued the other, "you must not be disheartened; this is no insurmountable obstacle. Till we can find the means of putting you to school in the evenings, I will give you lessons myself; and in this way, if you are willing to learn, you will soon acquire all that is necessary for our present purpose. But I would on no account advise you to stop here; get for yourself, if possible, a good education, and a perfect knowledge of accounts. Without this, you can never obtain any situation beyond that of a mere labourer; and with it, I would fain hope that you may yet rise to something better. There are other things to which I might advert, and upon which I might perhaps be able to give some information; but I have already told you as much as you can possibly remember, and I may therefore conclude by simply remarking, that it is by the attention which you must yourself devote to the subject afterwards, and not by any instructions of mine, that you are to succeed in the world."

Young people, in general, and particularly boys, are ever ready to indulge in sanguine anticipations. The friendless orphan already seemed to see wealth and preferment before him, and he stood ready to start in the race by which they were to be obtained. Daniel Forbes saw the new spirit which was beginning to animate him, and, deeming it a happy omen, he proceeded to inform him, that, on that very forenoon, he had spoken of his case to Mr Watson, the farmer of *the Mains of Daidlebank*, who, at the very time, happened to want a boy to drive a cart, which was then employed in conveying stones to the drains he had been for some t me past digging

Mr Watson was one of Mr Scattermite's tenants. He had obtained a new lease of his farm only a short time before prices began to rise; his rent was consequently moderate; he had been in good circumstances before; and, by improving his farm, which was one of the most extensive on the estate, he had been, for the last five or six years, rapidly amassing a fortune. Such was the individual in whose service George Winterton commenced his career. On the following day, he was preferred to be driver of the before-mentioned cart; in which situation he continued for the two following years, attending school regularly in the evenings; and, with the assistance of his best, and almost his only friend, always managing his little income in such a manner as to defray all his expenses. At the end of this period, labourers' wages being high, and as he, moreover, disliked the bondage of being engaged for a whole year, and wished to secure more time for his evening studies, he gave up farm-service, and commenced day-labourer. For three years more, however, he continued to find employment upon the same farm, and persisted assiduously in instructing himself in every branch of knowledge which was within his reach. In arithmetic, under all its phases, and in all the uses to which it is commonly applied, he had gone as far as the parish schoolmaster could go; in some other departments of education, by his own industry, aided by occasional assistance from others, he had made considerable advances; and the question, "how he should dispose of himself in future?" had begun to occur. This question he found it rather difficult to answer; but fortune was already preparing a train of events, which, as will afterwards appear, were destined to answer it for him.

He was now in his nineteenth year; and, in stature, and most other respects, he appeared to be a perfect man. His character for steadiness was also fully established; and his strength, dexterity, and the quantity of work which he could perform, were often spoken of in the most favourable terms. Though plainly dressed, it was generally acknowledged by the female part of the community, that "a better looking young man did not enter Strathendern kirk door." But, hitherto, he appeared to have been too busy to bestow much of his attention on female charms; and, as yet, he was not suspected of having shewn the smallest partiality for any one. This was reckoned a sort of prodigy; and it gave rise to some "wonderment," and several conjectures among the sage maidens, and still sager matrons of the place, who, in their own court, had decerned that it was altogether contrary to law for a man of his years not to have, at least, one or two acknowledged sweethearts. But, leaving them to the full credit of their important discovery, the circumstance will perhaps be best accounted for by another, which must now be noticed.

Mr Watson's eldest daughter was only a few months older than George Winterton. From having been educated mostly at home, she had not as yet acquired that distant manner which, when associating with common people, distinguishes persons in her station at the present day. When she first heard the story of the orphan, her girlish heart had given him all its sympathy; afterwards, she thought she was doing right in befriending one who had done so much for himself, without injuring or asking charity from others; and, for the last three or four years, a sort of half-childish, half-youthful friendship had subsisted between them. Wherever *he* chanced to be employed, thither she had, in general, directed her walk, at least once a day. Upon these occasions she had always some cheerful remark or friendly greeting, with which to approach him; and he—pleased, he knew not why, with her frankness—was always ready to return her salutation in the spirit in which it was given. When this intimacy commenced, she was a mere girl, while he was nothing more than a boy, so that the most jealous of either sex could scarcely have apprehended the smallest danger; but, at the end of four years, the one had become a beautiful young woman, and the other, as has been already hinted, was regarded as the best-looking youth in the parish. Such being the case, the reader will hardly be surprised to hear that, notwithstanding the difference of their prospects, those simple feelings of esteem which, at first, constituted their only connection, had, almost unknown to themselves, begun to give birth to others of a more absorbing nature. Of late, there had often been a degree of hesitation in Miss Watson's manner, as she approached him; on some occasions, she had passed him without speaking at all; and on others, when she did stop, both appeared to be embarrassed, and at a loss what to say.

After a considerable time spent in this sort of half-pleasing, half-painful suspense, during which, from the peculiarity of their circumstances, the latter quality must have predominated, they one day met, as was their wont, and again they seemed to have recovered, to a considerable extent, their former freedom of speech. By some curious coincidence, the conversation turned upon the pursuits of the different ranks of society, and the various degrees of happiness which they are supposed to derive from them. Their sentiments, in most respects, seemed to agree: and, after some other observations—

"I have sometimes fancied," said Miss Watson, "that a competence is all we can enjoy, and that those who labour for their bread may be as happy in each other's affections as those who must labour to spend useless thousands."

In giving utterance to this sentiment, she had been speaking without thinking; but the import of her speech, and the effect which, as matters stood, it might produce upon him to whom it was addressed, flashed across her mind as she concluded, and a burning blush was already on her cheek.

"O Emily, Emily," said George, raising his eyes as he spoke, "I would tell you—and yet, it is nothing better than madness." Here he caught a full view of her face—strangely and unwontedly interesting, from the emotion which now crimsoned it over;—he had never seen her thus before, and the effect which it produced on him, together with the importance of the secret which he was about to disclose, and the "madness," as he had himself said, of disclosing it, paralysed his tongue, and he forgot to finish the sentence he had begun. Both had stood for some seconds—it might be even minutes—in silence, when—

"How d'ye do to-day, Miss Watson?" was uttered by a voice behind them; and, on looking round, they both saw Andrew Scattermites, Esq., of Daidlebank, standing close beside Miss Watson, who now recovered herself so far as to return his salute in the ordinary manner.

Mr Scattermites had had frequent opportunities of seeing her at church and elsewhere; and, whatever his sentiments in other respects might be, he could not refrain from admiring her beauty. About this time, too, several of his creditors had begun to be rather pressing; and, as he was still unmarried, some of his boon companions had recommended *fortune-hunting* as the readiest means of retrieving his circumstances. He was too easy-tempered and too indolent to think of undergoing the fatigue of a long or a distant *chase;* and Mr Watson being known to be extremely rich for a farmer, it were difficult to say how far these considerations might influence him in his civility to the daughter. Be the matter as it may, he now offered her his arm, and asked if she would have any objection to take a walk with him across her father's farm. She was at the time too much agitated to frame a reasonable excuse for declining such an offer; and, fearing lest she should betray her agitation still farther were she to make the attempt—though she did not at all relish the adventure—she took his arm, and they moved off together. Before leaving the place, however, she turned to give her humble friend a look—as much as to say that,

though circumstances compelled her to accompany another, she had not forgotten him; but, stung by those passions which he neither knew how to express nor conceal, he had already sought refuge from his own unquiet thoughts in violent bodily exertion, and saw her not.

They had only proceeded about twenty yards on their proposed walk, when they heard a shot fired on the other side of a high hedge, which, at the place they then occupied, separated the Daidlebank from the Winkleburn estate; and, almost at the same moment, a partridge fell dead before them. Mr Scattermites stopped to look at it; and as they stood thus, the younger Mr Winkle emerged from an opening in the hedge, and advanced towards them with a gun in his hand. But on seeing Miss Watson, he seemed to forget the object of his search—the partridge which he had just shot—and, as soon as he was near enough to be heard—

"'Pon my honour!" he exclaimed, "you are a happy fellow, Scattermites—a perfect Apollo, with one of the Graces, as I declare, or rather Venus herself, hanging on his arm. Well, were I an Alexander, and master of the world, I would give it all to be in your place; and were I there, by Jove, I would make that fair angel who favours you with her company, the lady of Daidlebank before a week were at an end."

"And *what* if I should even do as you say, though I took a little more time to it?" was the Laird of Daidlebank's reply.

"Why—*what*," repeated the other, "in that case, I really don't know. But, of all the men in the world, I should certainly envy you your felicity, and perhaps fly to some foreign country, that I might not be tormented by witnessing so much happiness in which I could have no share."

What effect this conversation produced either upon Miss Watson or George Winterton—both of whom heard it distinctly—cannot be exactly told. The former appeared as if she would have been anywhere rather than where she was; but she could not get quit of her companions, and they proceeded together across the farm, Mr Scattermites still keeping hold of her arm; and at last adjourned to her father's house, where they were hospitably received, and spent the greater part of the evening.

The younger Mr Winkle, during the time he had been from home, had imbibed all those latitudinarian notions in love affairs, which—sad to say—are still too common in certain circles, and which were then, perhaps, even still more common than they are now. In his estimation, woman was nothing more than "a soulless toy," whose affections and person might be sported with to pass an idle hour, and then forgotten, without any regard to future consequences. Such being the case, it were a perversion of language to say that Miss Watson had made a *favourable* impression upon his heart; an impression, however, she had made; and, in the absence of those "creatures of the town," upon whom he had been accustomed to bestow his libertine attentions, he could not forget her.

Miss Watson spent the two following days almost exclusively in her own room, and in a state of mind not easy to be described. At times she accused herself bitterly for having spoken so unguardedly in the presence of one who, she feared, had already discovered her attachment to him—tormenting herself, the while, with apprehensions as to what he might think of her boldness: then she tried to conjecture what he would have said had he been permitted to finish what he had begun; and, when the thousand obstacles which lay between them presented themselves to her view, she regretted that he had not spoken more explicitly; imagining, if she had only heard from his own lips that her affection was returned, it would have reconciled her to her fate. Occasionally she tried to think of the means of transporting herself to some distant region, that she might never see him again; but the next moment she wished to see him once more, if it were only to have the melancholy pleasure of hearing him say *farewell*. The last thought seemed to prevail; for, on the afternoon of the third day, she sallied forth to take a walk; and, after several pauses, she was beginning to turn her steps in the wonted direction.

She had only proceeded a short distance, however, when she saw Mr Winkle, with his gun in his hand, disentangling himself from a small plantation, and hastening to salute her. On seeing him, she felt almost distracted; and, heedless of his calling after her, she hurried back to the house, whither he, at first, seemed preparing to follow her; but, upon second thoughts, he stopped short, and, calling in his dogs, which were now scampering over the fields, set off in an opposite direction. Sullen, and disappointed of the interview which he expected, he soon chafed himself into that state of mind in which a man is ready to quarrel with every one he meets, and even with inanimate objects, if no living thing should cross his path. But here we must leave him for the present.

The short dialogue which passed between Mr Winkle and Mr Scattermites, when the former crossed the hedge in quest of the partridge, had been carefully picked up by some people who were employed in an adjoining field: it set their imaginations to work, and, on getting home, they told what they had seen and heard, declaring, at the same time, their firm conviction that both Mr Scattermites and Mr Winkle were in love with Miss Watson. The story ran; it soon reached the ears of George Winterton; and, as it was partly corroborated by what he too had seen and heard, it soon became to him a subject of serious reflection. "The silence and apparent abstraction of Miss Watson," he argued with himself, "might proceed from a *wish* to break off, gradually, that intercourse which had long subsisted between them; and this wish might have its origin in a knowledge that she was soon to be removed to a sphere where it would be impossible for her to acknowledge so humble a friend. Her emotion, too, during their last meeting, and the blushes with which it had covered her countenance, might proceed from her having seen Mr Scattermites approaching, and an apprehension that he had overheard what she had been saying." The willingness with which she had accompanied the last-mentioned gentleman, seemed to strengthen him in these opinions; and, though it was gall and wormwood to his spirit, he soon succeeded in convincing himself that Miss Watson cared not a single fig for him—that her heart already *was* and her hand would soon *be*, given to one or other of her suitors, and that he had been all the while labouring under a gross delusion. He could not blame her for the course she had adopted; and yet, the thought that she must be another's stung him to the quick.

So absorbed was he in these reflections, that he did not observe a gentleman in a shooting dress pass close behind him; but his attention was now called away by the piteous howling of a dog; and, on looking up, he saw Mr Winkle scourging one of his pointers most unmercifully within a few yards of him. The dog, wearied out, as it appeared with the insatiable cruelty of its tormentor, at last snapped at his hand, and bit him so severely that he instantly quitted his hold, uttering, at the same time, a terrible imprecation, which, for the reader's sake, is here omitted. Mr Winkle now came close to where George was employed, and having again decoyed the poor animal to the same place—

"Here, fellow," said he, "I want you to come and hold this dog till I punish him."

Nothing could have been more repugnant to the feelings of the other than the task here assigned him; the individual who had assigned it was also, for reasons which the reader will understand, anything but agreeable to him:

yet he obeyed. But when the poor animal, writhing its neck around, looked up in his face with an eye expressive of the acutest pain and the most earnest supplication, he felt that he could hold it no longer, and, quitting it at once, he turned and looked its master sternly in the face.

"Why did you let go the dog, you fumbling block-head!" bawled the gentleman, in a most inordinate passion.

"Because I could not endure to see you tormenting him," was the calm reply of the other, while he still kept up the same stern look.

"Torment—torment!" repeated Mr Winkle, his rage almost choking him; "and what do you look at now, you misshapen, ignorant, uncultivated baboon?"

"At you," said the other, without much apparent emotion, though his cheek reddened as he spoke.

"Then, I would advise you to look at something else," rejoined Mr Winkle; "or, d—— me——But first, I say, go and catch that dog, I say, and hold him for me, I say, as long as I desire you, or, by the portals of heaven and the gates of hell, I will blow your brains out this very instant!—that is, if there are any in that skull of yours; and if there are none, I can do no harm by sending a quantity of lead through it."

With these words he stooped down to take up his fowling-piece, apparently for the purpose of putting his threat in execution; but George, who now began to apprehend real danger, laid hold of it by the *but*, almost as soon as the hand of the other had touched the muzzle. A short scuffle ensued, in which Mr Winkle was thrown down; and the other proceeded deliberately to place the gun across his knee, breaking it in two behind the lock; after which he demolished the lock itself, so far as to render it unserviceable, and then threw down both pieces before its owner, who took them up, and walked away, muttering vengeance between his teeth.

When the other was gone, a moment's reflection served to convince George Winterton that the affair would not be allowed to terminate here; and, as it was now evening, he collected his implements, and hastened off to take the advice of his friend.

"Well," said Daniel, after hearing the statement which the other laid before him, "I cannot see that you have done very far wrong; but you must make yourself scarce here before morning; for, should you remain another day, from the summary manner in which the laws are now executed against the poor, the army or the navy is the least punishment you can expect."

These observations were felt and acknowledged to be but too true; and the question now was, where he should go?

"If I were to speak my own opinion," said Daniel, "I would say that I know of no place in this king's dominions where you would be safer than in London itself—that is, if you have money to carry you there."

The other stated that he had saved about twenty pounds; and London was immediately fixed on as his destination. Of the feelings of the lover, want of space forbids us to speak. He had been advised to *keep his own secrets:* this was one the disclosing of which could do no good. He was convinced that his passion was hopeless—expediency pointed, strong necessity urged, and he complied. The money was procured; as many of the notes as possible were converted into *hard cash;* and, when he was about to depart—

"Well, George," said his friend, "I need not again repeat the advices which I have already given you; but there is another which I would add before bidding you farewell: when people who are in quest of employment come among strangers, it is common for them to talk fluently of the recommendations they have received from others, and of the kinds and quantities of work which they have performed, hoping thereby to obtain favour with their new masters; but these practices have been so often resorted to that they have lost their effect, and I would therefore have you to adopt a quite different course. At first, refuse no sort of employment, however humble: place your foot upon the lowest step of the ladder, and, by all means, try to convince your employer that you have no objection to having as many *spies* and *checks* upon your conduct as he may think proper. Should he speak of the subject to you, tell him at once that you have no wish to be trusted, that he is perfectly welcome to consider you the greatest rogue upon earth, and, should he see cause, to treat you as such. From being closely watched, no honest man need shrink; of being closely watched, no honest man need be ashamed; and the world is such, that really every precaution, on the part of those who have property at stake, is necessary. By these means, if I mistake not, you will procure the confidence of your employers a thousand times sooner than if you were to declare to them upon oath that you are the honestest and the best man in the world."

There was something in the last observation which brought a smile to the young man's face; and his friend, taking advantage of the momentary lightness of spirits which it indicated, hurried him away, almost before he had time to express his thanks, or to say *farewell.* And, thus advised, he turned his back upon the scenes of his nativity, and upon all he loved on earth.

On reaching London, the first employment which George Winterton procured, was shoveling a quantity of coals into a cellar. When he had completed the operation, a middle-aged gentleman, belonging to the mercantile class, paid him for his labour, desiring him at the same time to stop for a quarter of an hour, as he was not certain but he might have something else for him to do. He obeyed; and while the other stood by, took a small book from his pocket, and began to write with a pencil.

"What!" said the merchant, in some surprise, "you are not a poor author, I hope."

"No, sir," was the reply.

"Then, if it were not an impertinent question," said the other, "I would ask in what way a Scotch labourer, who, you say, came to London only two days ago, can be benefited by writing at such a time as this?"

"I was simply noting down the money I had just received from you," was again the brief reply.

"Then you keep accounts, do you?" rejoined the merchant.

"I do, sir," said George.

"Well," continued the other, "this book of yours must be a curiosity in its way; and, I confess, if a Londoner might presume so far, I should really like to see it." Here the book was put into his hands; and as his eye fell upon the expenses of the last fortnight, "An original!" he ejaculated. And, after a short pause, "eighteen, six," he continued, running over the addition—"yes, perfectly correct—eighteen shillings and sixpence; and is that the whole expense of your journey to London?"

"It is," said the other; "and, as my breakfast and dinner, during the first part of it, only cost me, at an average, three-halfpence for bread, and twopence for small beer, the sum would have been considerably less, had it not been for my bed and supper, which always cost me a shilling."

"And, pray, what might be the length of your journey?" inquired the merchant, now evidently beginning to be interested.

"Upwards of four hundred miles," was the reply.

"Four hundred miles upon eighteen shillings and sixpence!" responded the trader. "By the gods of the ancients! a strange fellow indeed. But can I believe all this?"

"As I can have no purpose to serve by deceiving you," said the other, "neither have I any wish that you should

believe me." Then, recollecting the parting words of his friend—"I make you," he continued, "and every man living, perfectly welcome to *think* of me as the greatest rogue upon earth, and to treat me as such if they find me deserving."

"Well, to confess a truth," rejoined the merchant, "I know not well what to think of you. But, pray, what have you drunk for the last two days? I do not see a single *pot of beer* in your whole account."

"When I was thirsty," said George, "which was but seldom, I drank water—which is, in my opinion, by far the most wholesome beverage."

"Water!" responded the other. "How, in the name of wonder, can you contrive to live and to labour with nothing stronger than water to drink?"

"That I do live, your own eyes may convince you," said George; "and, as to my ability to labour, if you have any doubts do not take my word for it, but make what experiments you please."

"A strange character indeed!" ejaculated the merchant, half speaking to himself, and half thinking aloud. "Travelled four hundred miles upon eighteen shillings and sixpence—does not wish to be trusted, and drinks nothing but water—writes a beautiful hand—young—of a powerful make—economical—abstemious—and, withal, apparently intelligent. Well," he continued, addressing George more directly, "I do not think these fellows are coming to-night, so you may go to your lodging. But, before you engage in any other employment, I should be glad to see you at my warehouse, No. — —— Street, at eight o'clock to-morrow morning."

George kept the appointment, and was almost immediately engaged to serve in an inferior station by Mr Ashton, the gentleman who had employed him on the preceding day. Here we must pass briefly over a portion of his story. He rose rapidly in his master's confidence and favour, and was preferred from one place of trust to another, till—such was the esteem in which he was held—he was frequently a guest at Mr Ashton's table. But, upon these occasions, though all sorts of delicacies were placed before him, he still continued to adhere, as far as possible, to his former abstemious mode of living, always preferring the plainest provisions, and firmly declining almost every kind of liquor which was stronger than water. For his conduct in this respect, his uniform excuse was, that he did not wish to habituate himself to any luxury, lest it should become indispensable; and, when the other guests saw that he was firm to his purpose, with the exception of Miss Ashton, who continued to rally him on his "strange habits" to the last, they forbore to trouble him either with *pressing* or questions.

Here the reader may be told, that Miss Ashton was, in some respects, rather an extraordinary character. "Tall beyond her sex and her compeers," of the most elegant proportions, and with a set of features in which it would have been difficult to discover aught amiss, with all this there was but little about her which attracted the admiration of strangers. Those little "sayings and doings," in which so many find a never-failing source of excitement, for her had scarcely a single charm. In large or mixed companies she was generally silent. When unexcited, her countenance bore no marked expression; and her deep, blue eye, was rather dull than otherwise. Imaginative and shy, her spirit thirsted for something beyond the daily recurrences of eating, and drinking, and fashionable amusements, however brilliantly these might be conducted; and, in the absence of more stirring events and more extraordinary characters, she found that *something* in the simple story of George Winterton. Still young—deprived of his parents when a boy—destitute of friends and connections to forward him in the world—and driven, by the insolence of a petty tyrant, to undertake a journey of four hundred miles, without warning, without preparation, and at midnight, in quest of safety and of bread: on these she delighted to ponder. And, then, his confidence in his own resources, thrown, as he was, among strangers—his generosity—his utter scorn of meanness and deceit—and, above all, his self-denial and rigid sobriety—qualities so rare at his age, and so unlike those of almost every other individual with whom she was acquainted: to these features in his character she could always turn with increasing pleasure; her imagination was never weary of them; and George Winterton soon began to occupy a very considerable portion of her musings. When he was present, her looks became animated, expressive, and beautiful, in no ordinary degree; there was an ease, a grace, and a lightness, in all her motions, wholly unknown before; a permanent smile arched her eyebrows and played around her lips; and her eye appeared not so much "the mirror of her thoughts," as "in itself a soul." Yet—these apart—the most critical observer could not have supposed, for a moment, that she regarded him with the least partiality. When absent, she never mentioned his name; nor did she ever try to throw herself in his way, or to seek or to shun his company when alone. She neither praised nor blamed, nor did nor said aught from which it could have been inferred that she was in love.

Of *his* affections at this particular period it were difficult to speak. Three years had now elapsed since he left his native country. He felt pleased with Miss Ashton; but, then, his heart had been severely singed already, and not without some reason, for suspecting that he had played the fool, in lavishing his affections upon one whose station was so far above his own. He had determined never to do so again; and he supposed himself equal to the task. His life was, at present, a busy one; and, if ever he found time for solitary musing, his thoughts naturally wandered back to the scenes of his nativity—to his early haunts, and to Miss Watson—sometimes in sorrow, sometimes in anger, and sometimes with those vague hopes which the heart will occasionally cherish, even in the midst of despair.

About four years after his arrival in London, by his foresight and prudent management, he was instrumental in saving the firm from ruin; and, shortly thereafter, when he proposed quitting his situation for another, which promised to be more lucrative, Mr Ashton, as an inducement to him to remain, frankly offered him a share of the business—which offer he did not think proper to reject.

Miss Ashton's charms had now procured her a distinguished suitor, in the person of Lord H——; and her parents were anxious for the match; but she still continued to manifest a decided disinclination to it. About the same time, the interests of the firm were again threatened by an apprehended failure in one of the principal manufacturing towns, in a distant part of the island; and the younger partner had proposed to go immediately and investigate the whole affair in person. Everything was prepared for his departure; but, when he was almost ready to start, Mr Ashton sent to request a private interview.

"George," said he, after taking two or three turns across the room—"My dear George, we have been, for some time past, endeavouring to reconcile Lilias to a match with Lord H——; but, hitherto, our endeavours have been to no purpose. Now, as she has all along manifested the highest respect for your understanding, would you favour a parent, who is anxious for the welfare of an only child, so far as to try if you can make her alter her resolution, before you set off."

The individual thus addressed felt an indescribable reluctance to the undertaking. The idea of Miss Ashton's marriage, for the first time brought formally before him, sent a cold feeling to his heart. But he was in a hurry;

he owed her father much; and he consented to make the attempt. When introduced to her, however, it was a considerable time before he could make any allusion to the subject; but, at last, after a number of preliminary hems, he stammered out something about "being most happy to see her united to a gentleman whose name would be an honour"——

"What!" interrupted Miss Ashton, with a faint smile, "would Mr Winterton really advise me to marry"—here she made a short pause; a momentary paleness passed over her countenance; and then she added, emphatically—"to marry a man whom I cannot love?"

The other felt embarrassed; but he felt also that he must say something. He had promised to Mr Ashton; his time was passing; and—

"Not contrary to your own inclination," he again stammered forth; "but the connection is so honourable, and your father seems so anxious to see you well settled in life, that, really, as a favour, I would request you to think seriously of the subject."

"I am sorry," said Miss Ashton, with a deep sigh, "at being under the necessity of informing you, that *that* is almost the only favour which you could have asked that I would not grant, if it were in my power."

As she concluded, she fixed her eyes on the floor, leaned her head pensively on her hand, and appeared to commune with her own thoughts. The other did not feel greatly distressed at his want of success. He would have expressed his sorrow, however, at having given her unnecessary trouble; but the rattling of the coach which was to convey him the first stage of his journey warned him hence, and, in bidding her *good morning*, he had only time to remark that her hand did not return the warm pressure which he gave, as was its wont, and that she did not rise, as on some former occasions, to accompany him to the door. He had, however, little time to think; for, the next minute, he was off, as fast as four horses could carry him, for his destination, where a number of thwarting incidents conspired to detain him for several months.

On entering his daughter's apartment, Mr Ashton found her recovering from a state of insensibility—for which she did not and he could not account; but, as she was soon, so far as appearances went, perfectly recovered, the surprise and alarm created by the circumstance wore off. From that day, however, her health and her spirits rapidly declined. In a few weeks, she was confined to bed, and all farther negociations for her marriage with Lord H—— were broken off.

After physicians had exhausted their skill, and every art had been tried in vain, a sort of glimmering of the real cause of their daughter's illness began to dawn upon the minds of her parents, who immediately dispatched a letter to George Winterton, stating the cause of their distress, and begging him to hasten his return as fast as possible. Calculating upon no mischance, he was expected on the morrow; and both parents were sitting by the bedside of the invalid, with the intention of preparing her for his return; but, before they could introduce the subject, she began to tell them where they would find a sealed letter, in her own hand, which she begged they would not open till after she was gone. This gave a new turn to the conversation; and they were endeavouring to chase these gloomy forebodings from her mind, when George Winterton entered, or rather burst into the room.

"My dear Lilias!" he exclaimed, as he hastened toward her, "at our last parting how little did I expect to find you thus!"

His flushed countenance indicated the haste with which he had travelled, and the concern which he then felt; and, when he spoke, there was that tender earnestness in his tones which can never be mistaken. When the poor invalid first caught a glance of him, she endeavoured to turn away her head; but, as the words "dear Lilias" fell from his lips, her eye again wandered back to him, and in it a brighter beam seemed about to dawn. A hectic tinge rose over her pale cheek, and a smile was beginning to play around her lips as he took her hand.

"George," she said, endeavouring to raise herself a little, and to return the warm pressure of those fingers in which her own were now clasped—"George, I thought you had forgo—otten"——

Here a convulsive flutter of the heart checked her utterance, and almost prevented her from making the last part of the last word audible. When her bosom had ceased to heave, the smile remained on her countenance, and her hand still continued to *press;* but her breathing was at an end, and her pulse was gone. Her exhausted frame, unable to withstand the sudden revulsion of feeling, occasioned by so unexpected a meeting, had yielded to the shock; and, like more than one of her sex who have fallen victims to the warmth of their own affections, she was dead.

"The lamentation, and mourning, and wo" of the parents, we must pass over. After the funeral, her letter was opened, and read amid the sobs and tears of all present. At first, the writer spoke of her approaching fate with that composure which a perfect familiarity with the subject alone can confer; and, after indulging a few tender recollections, proceeded as follows:—

"You taught me early to despise many of those vanities which others pursue, and to regard worth and virtue alone as worthy of admiration. These I fancied I could discover in Mr Winterton, shortly after he was taken into your service, and I admired them. But this is not all; I did more. I was young and inexperienced, and, without knowing what I did, I loved him. Why should I be ashamed to confess it now, when this poor palpitating heart will be still and cold before the confession meets your eye? Yes, for years I loved him, and indulged the delusion, that, though he did not love me as I loved him, still I had a place in his affections. But at last he undeceived me himself; and, when that deception was swept away, I felt that the charm of existence was at an end. But, though he loved me not, he deserved my love—he deserves it still—and he deserves yours also. * * * Had I lived, I know that I was to have been your heir; and often did I please myself with the idea of seeing you, at some future period, delivering those treasures which were hoarded for me into *his* hands. But this might not be. Before you read what I am writing, I shall be beyond the reach of all that pleases mortals. Yet, I trust heaven will long spare him for whom alone I wished riches and beauty, and every other earthly accomplishment, to be a comforter to you when I am no more. But, long as I have deferred it, I must now come to that request which was my object in beginning to write—a request which, if granted, would lessen the reluctance of your only child to leave her parents behind her. When I am gone, let *him* be to you what *I should have been.* I cannot speak it plainer; but you will understand my meaning."

* * * * * *

It were waste of time to say that, when this letter was read, George Winterton wept as he had never wept before, to think what a treasure had been lost to the world and to him, through his own want of discernment. Mr Ashton lost no time in complying with the request which it contained. A deed was immediately executed, by which his partner in business was declared "sole heir of all he possessed;" the only stipulation being, that he should take the name along with the property which he was to inherit. To him this was an immense acquisition of fortune; but over his spirits a melancholy had now sunk, which divested every earthly object—fortune not excepted

—of its interest. While he enjoyed, or had the prospect of again enjoying the society of Miss Ashton, he never gave himself the trouble of estimating how much of the charm of existence he owed to that source. More than half her worth too, as he fancied, and nearly the whole of her affection for him, had been concealed till she was no more; and he accused himself bitterly of wringing a heart too exquisitely formed for this world, and thus bringing to her end one whose equal he never expected to see again. If he had not loved her as he should have done while she was living, that very circumstance invested her memory with a more painful and abiding interest, now that she was dead. In this state of mind he sometimes tried to comfort the bereaved parents; but he was as one of "Job's comforters," or rather as Job would have been had he tried to comfort his comforters. For this, however, fate had provided a remedy: Mr Ashton was soon carried off by a malignant disease; and his widow died, a few months afterwards, of *excessive grief*, to which the physicians gave another name.

Thus left—the friends of Mr Ashton, as he must henceforth be called, advised him strongly to give up business, purchase an estate in the country, and remove thither, as the only means of dissipating that gloom which now hung over his spirits; and to this suggestion he yielded so far as to authorize one of their number, if anything of the kind should appear in the market, to make the proposed purchase. Shortly thereafter, he received a letter from his friend, stating that an estate in Scotland had been bought in his name, and that his presence in Edinburgh would be necessary by the first of next month, to transact some business relative to the final transfer of the property. His friend, however, probably from a wish to surprise him, said nothing of the name of the estate, or the county in which it lay. And Mr Ashton, without feeling at all interested in these matters, set off at the time appointed. But, owing either to some mistake in his friend's communication, or to a want of punctuality in those who had been employed to make out the legal instruments, he arrived a whole week too soon. Three of these days he had passed in his lodgings without seeing a single acquaintance; and, on the fourth, as he was sitting with Miss Ashton's letter, which he always carried along with him, in his hand, a servant announced "a lady who," he said, "was the daughter of one of his tenants, and came to prefer a request in behalf of her father."

As the individual thus announced entered the room, she hung down her head from extreme diffidence; and this circumstance, aided by a bonnet and a veil, nearly concealed her face. Mr Ashton rose to receive her, almost without looking at her; and, after seeing her seated, he begged her to proceed, assuring her, at the same time, that, if her request were at all reasonable, it would be granted. Thus encouraged—

"I have come," said she, "to entreat your forbearance for a father who has been nearly ruined by the intrigues and the extravagance of others, and who is now struggling——But I beg your pardon, sir, I have certainly been deceived."

Struck with the apparent incoherency of her words, Mr Ashton now turned on her a look of earnest inquiry; and, in throwing aside her veil, she discovered to his astonished eyes the features of the once loved, but now almost forgotten Emily Watson. All her youthful gaiety was gone; care and anxiety seemed to have subdued her former buoyancy of spirits; and her countenance now wore a mingled expression of agitation and sadness. The reader need not be told that the interview which followed was an interesting one. The surprise of meeting her in such circumstances, and so unexpectedly, was to the other like an electric shock, which aroused his faculties from that torpor under which they had long lain buried. Both, as it appeared, had cause for mourning; their sorrow seemed to form a new bond of union; and a wish to hear her story was almost the first thing in which he had felt interested since the death of Miss Ashton. Of the story, however, a mere skeleton is all that can be offered to the reader.

Mr Scattermites had kept up a show of attention to Miss Watson as long as her father had money to lend him; and, when this was done, to clear off an old debt with Mr Winkle, for the recovery of which the latter had begun to institute a legal process, he offered the Mains of Daidlebank for sale, which was immediately bought, or rather appropriated by old Winkle, who, however, only lived to enjoy it about three months. The younger Winkle, now freed from restraint by his father's death, finding Miss Watson proof against all his arts, had seduced one of her sisters, who, on being abandoned, sickened at the idea of that shame which she could no longer conceal, and soon after died. The mother was so overwhelmed with her daughter's disgrace, that insanity followed, and she had to be removed to an asylum. Mr Watson himself tried to take legal vengeance on the seducer of his child; but, after having expended more money in the attempt than he could spare, the case was decided against him; and, to make matters worse, an incensed landlord began to reckon hard with him for the rent, which he was now unable to pay. As a last resource, he began to press Mr Scattermites for the sums which he had borrowed, who, to avoid bankruptcy, married a strange-looking woman from England, who gave herself out for a great heiress; but the whole was a cheat, and his estate was thrown into the market. By some legal trick, however, Mr Watson was excluded from the dividend arising from the sale, and compelled to borrow money to satisfy the laird. Shortly thereafter, the extravagance of Mr Winkle brought Winkleburn into the market also; and Miss Watson, on learning, from a friend in Edinburgh, that it had been bought by an English gentleman of the name of Ashton, and that he was then in the Scottish metropolis, immediately hurried off to entreat a respite for her father, who was unable to pay the rent, in consequence of the borrowed money becoming due about the same time. The reader knows what followed.

In time Miss Watson was married to her early lover and she is now the mother of a numerous and a happy family. Mr Watson's circumstances were soon rendered easy; and—such is the effect of prosperity—even his demented wife, on being informed that her daughter was Lady of Winkleburn, recovered her reason, and lived long after to bless his declining years. Mr Ashton still retains a number of his early habits; and, in so far as himself is concerned, he is a strict economist. His fare is almost as simple, and his dress almost as plain, as those of a peasant. He superintends the cultivation of a considerable portion of his estate himself, and upon it the servants are regarded as the happiest men in the parish. If anything could have given Mr Ashton more pleasure than another, it would have been to provide in the most ample manner for his early friend; but Daniel Forbes had been accustomed to provide for himself, and would accept of no provision. He lived, however, to see his three sons farmers on the estate of Winkleburn, and died only a few years ago.

WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

PRESCRIPTION; OR, THE 29TH OF SEPTEMBER.

The serene calmness and holy inspiration of some of our cottage retreats in Scotland are often the envy of the town-poet or philosopher, who look upon the sequestered spots as possessing all the beauty and repose of the beatific Beulah, where the feet of the pilgrim found repose, and his spirit rest. The desire arises out of that discontent, which, less or more, is the inheritance of man in this sphere; it is the residuum of the worldly feelings which, like the clay that, in inspired hands, gave the power of sight to the blind, opens the eyes to immortality. The wish for retirement belongs to good, if it is not a part of the great principle that inclines us to look far away to purer regions for the rest which is never disturbed, and the joy that knows no abatement. Yet how vain are often our thoughts as we survey the white-washed hut in the valley, covered with honeysuckle and white roses; the plot before the door; the croonin dame on her tripod; the lass with the lint-white locks, singing, in snatches of Nature s own language, her purest feelings, like the swelling of a mountain spring. The heart is not still there any more than in the crowded mart. The birds whistle, but they die too; the rose blooms, but it is eaten in the heart by the palmer worm; the sun shines, but there is a shade at his back. Alas for mortal aspirations—there is nothing here of one side. Like the two parties who fought for the truth of the two pleas—that the statue was white, or that it was black—we find, after all our labour lost, that one side is of the one colour, and the other of the opposite. These thoughts arise in us at this moment as we recollect the little cottage of Homestead, situated in a collateral valley on the Borders. We were born at a stone-cast from it; and, even in the dream of age, see issuing from it, or entering it, a creature who might have stood for Wordsworth's Highland Girl—a slender, gracile thing, retiring and modest; as delicate in her feelings as in the hue of her complexion; her thoughts of her glen and waterfall only natural to her—all others, fearful even to herself, glenting forth through a flushed medium, which equally betrayed the workings of the blood in the transparent veins—a being of young life, elasticity, and sensitiveness, such as, like some modest flower, we find only in certain recesses of the valleys in mountain-lands. Such were you, Alice Scott, when you first darted across our path on the hills. We have said that we see you now through the dream of age; and, holding to the parallel, there is a change o'er the mood of our vision, for we see you again in a form like that of "The Ladye Geraldine"—your mountain russets off; the bandeau that bound the flying locks laid aside; the irritability and flush of the young spirit abated; and, instead of these, the gown of silk, the coif of satin, and the slow and dignified step of conscious worth and superiority. And whence this change?

The young female we have thus apostrophised, was the daughter of Adam Scott, a cottar, who occupied the small cottage of Homestead, under the proprietor of Whitecraigs—a fine property, lying to the south of the cottage; and the mansion of which is yet to be seen by the traveller who seeks the Tweed by the windings of the river Lyne. Old Adam died, and left his widow and daughter to the protection of his superior, Mr Hayston, who, recollecting the services and stanch qualities of his tenant, did not despise the charge. The small bield was allowed to the mother and daughter, rent free; and some assistance, in addition to the produce of their hands, enabled them to live as thousands in this country live, whose capability of supporting life might be deemed a problem, difficult of solution by those whose only care is how to destroy God's gifts. Nature is as curious in her disposal of qualities as the great genius of chance or convention is of the distribution of means. Literature has worn out the characteristic and gloomy lines of the description of the fair and the good; and the impatience of the mind of the nineteenth century—a mind greedy of caricature, and regardless of written sentiment—may warn us from the pourtrayment of what people now like better to see than to read or hear of. Away, then, with the usual terms, and let old Dame Scott and her daughter be deemed as of those beings who have interested you in the quiet recesses of humble poverty, where Nature, as if in sport or satire, loves to play fantastic tricks. If you have no living models to go by, call up some of the pages of the thousand volumes that have been multiplied on a subject which has been more spoiled by poetical imagery than benefited by sober observation.

Within about five years of the death of the husband and father, old Hayston died, and left Whitecraigs to his only son, Hector, who was kind enough to continue the gift of the father to the inmates of Homestead; but he loaded them with a condition unspoken yet implied. The young laird and the pretty cottage maiden had foregathered often amidst the romantic scenes on the Lyne; and that which Nature probably intended as a guard and a mean of segregation—the shrinking timidity of her own mountain child, when looked upon by the eye of, to her, aristocracy—only tended to an opposite effect. A poet has compared love to an Eastern bird, which loses all its beauty when it flies; and it is as true as it is a pretty conceit; but if there was any feathered creature whose wings, reflecting, from its monaul tints, the sun in greater splendour, when on the wing, it would supply as applicable and not less poetical an emblem of the object of the little god's heart-stirrings; and so it seemed to the young Laird of Whitecraigs, that, as Alice Scott bounded away over the green hills, or down by the Lyne banks, at his approach her flight added to the interest which she had already inspired when she had no means of escape. But, as the wildest doe may be caught and tamed, so was she, who was as a white one, removed from the herd. The young man possessed attractions beside those of imputed wealth and station; and, probably, though we mean not to be severe upon the sex, the process by which his affection had been increased was reversed in its effects upon her, to whom assiduous seeking was as the assiduous retreating had been to him.

Yet, all was, we believe, honourable in the intentions of young Hayston; and, as for Alice, she was in the primeval condition of a total unconsciousness of evil. The "one blossom on earth's tree," as the poet has it, was by her yet

unplucked, nor knew she how many thousands have had cause to sing—

"I have plucked the one blossom that hangs on earth's tree;
I have lived—I have loved, and die."

Her former timidity was the *a priori* proof of the strength of the feeling that followed, when the sensitiveness of fear gave way to confidence. Town loves are a thing of sorry account: the best of them are a mere preference of the one to the many; and he who is fortunate enough to outshine his rivals, may pride himself in the possession of some superior recommendations which have achieved a triumph. Were he to look better to it, he might detect something, too, in the force of resources. At best, a few hundred pounds will turn the scale; for he is by all that a better man; and the trained eye of town beauties have a strange responsive twinkle in the glare of the one thing needful. In the remote and beautiful parts of a romantic country, things are otherwise ordered: affection there, is as the mountain flower to the gallipot rose; and it is a mockery to tell us that the difference is only perceptible to those who are weak enough to be romantic. A doughty warrior would recognise and acknowledge the difference, and fight a great deal better, too, after he had blubbered over a mountain or glen born love, for a creature who would look upon him as the soul of the retreat, and hang on his breast in the outpourings of Nature's feelings. That young Whitecraigs appreciated the triumph he had secured, there can be no reason to doubt. He had been within the drying atmosphere of towns, and had sung and waltzed, probably, with a round hundred of creatures who understood the passion, much as Audrey understood poetry—deeming it honest enough, but yet a composition made up of the elements of side glances, arias, smorzando-sighs, and quadrilles. With Alice Scott on his bosom, the quiet glen as their retreat, the green umbrageous woods their defence, its birds as their musicians, and the wimpling Lyne as the speaking Naïade, he forgot if he did not despise the scenes he had left. She flew from him now no longer. The fowler had succeeded to captivate, not intentionally to kill.

Two years passed over in this intercourse. There was no secret about it. The dame was well apprised of their proceeding; and the open frankness of the youth dispelled all the fears of wrong, which the innocence of the daughter, undefended by experience, might have scarcely guaranteed to one who, at least, had heard something of the ways of the world. The income from Whitecraigs, somewhere about seven hundred a-year, was more than sufficient for the expenditure of the older Haystons; and Hector, at this time, did not seem inclined to alter the line of life followed by his fathers. He had not spoken of marriage to the mother; but he had not hesitated to breathe into the ear of Alice all that was necessary to lead her to the conclusion, to which her heart jumped, that she was to be the lady of the stately white manson that, at one time, had appeared to her as a great temple where humble worshippers of the glen and the wood might not lay their sandals at the doorway. She had entered the vestibule only as an alms-seeker, and trembled to think she might have been observed throwing a side-glance into the interior, where pier-glasses might have reflected the form of the russet-clad child of the valley and hill. The tale has been told a thousand times, and the world is not mended by it. The young master pressed her to his bosom, imprinted a kiss, and was away into the mazes of life, in the metropolis, whither some affairs, left unsettled by his father, carried him. Six months passed away, and the rents of the succeeding term were collected by Mr Pringle, the agent of the family, in Peebles. There was no word for poor Alice, though the small allowance was handed in by the agent, who, ignorant of the state of matters between the young couple, informed the mother that the master of Whitecraigs was on the eve of being married to a young lady of some wealth in the metropolis. The statement was heard by the daughter; and what henceforth but that of Thekla's song:—

"The clouds are flying, the woods are sighing—
The maiden is walking the grassy shore;
And as the wave breaks with might, with might,
She singeth aloud through the darksome night;
But a tear is in her troubled eye."

Alice Scott was changed; yet, who shall tell what that change was? If the slow and even progress of the spirit may defy the eye of the metaphysician, who may describe its moods of disturbance. Poetry is familiar with these things, and we have fair rhymes to tell us of the wanderings, and the lonely musings by mountain streams, and the eye that looks and sees not, and the wasting form, and the words that come like the sounds from deep caves; yet, after all, they tell us but little, and that little is, but to tickle us with the resonance of spoken sentiment, leaving the sad truth as little understood as before. True it was, that Alice Scott did all these things, and more too: the charm of the hills and the water banks was gone; the light spirit that carried her along, as if borne in the winds, was quenched; the songs by which she gladdened the ears of her mother, as she plied her portable handwork on the green, was no more heard mingling its notes with the music of the Lyne; and the face that shone transparently like painted alabaster, as if part of the light came from within, was as the poets say—

"Like the April morn,
Clad in a wintry cloud."

Nor did additional time seem to possess any power save that of increasing the pain of the heart-stroke. Most of the griefs of mortals have their appointed modes of alleviation—some are complaining griefs, some are talkative, and some sorrows are sociable for selfishness. But the heart-wound of her, who has only those scenes of nature which were associated with the image of the unkind one, to wear off the impressions of which, under other hues, they form a part, is a silent mourner. There is enough of a painful eloquence around her, and her voice would be only the small whisper that is lost in the wailings of the storm in the glen. Yet painful as the language is, she courts it in silence, even while it mixes and blends with the poison which consumes her. It was in vain that her mother, who saw with a parental eye the malady which is the best understood by those of her class and age, urged her with kindness to betake herself to her household duties. She was seldom to be prevailed upon to remain within doors; the hill-side, or the bosom of the glen, or the back of the willows by the water-side, were her choice. Ordinary meal times were forgotten or unheeded, where Nature had renounced her cravings, or given all her energies to the heart.

The next intelligence received at Homestead was that of the marriage of Hector Hayston, and his departure for France. The servants at Whitecraigs were discharged, as if there had been no expectation, for a long period, of the return of the young laird. The supply to the two females was increased, and paid by Mr Pringle, who, now probably aware of the situation of Alice, delicately avoided any allusion to his employer. Report, however, was busy with her tales; and the absence of the youth was attributed to the workings of conscience or of shame. There was little truth in the report. The object of his first affections might easily have been banished from Whitecraigs, and he who had been guilty of leaving her may be supposed capable of removing her from scenes which could only add to her sorrow. A true solution of his conduct might have been found in the fact, that Hayston was now following his pleasures in the society of his wife's friends—a gay and lavish circle—and did not wish to detract from his enjoyment by adding banish-

ment and destitution to a wrong now irremediable. Little more was heard of him for some time, with the exception of a floating report, that he had borrowed, through his agent, the sum of ten thousand pounds from a Mr Colville, a neighbouring proprietor, and pledged to him Whitecraigs in security. The circumstance interested greatly the neighbouring proprietors, who shook their heads in significant augury of the probable fate of their young neighbour in the whirlpool of continental life. Yet the allowance to Dame Scott at the next term was regularly paid; and if there was a tear in her eye, as she looked, first at the money, and then at the thin, pallid creature who sat silent at the window, it was not that she dreaded its discontinuance from the result of the extravagance of the giver. The effect of the act of payment of the money had, on a former occasion, been noticed by Pringle on the conduct of Alice: it was on this occasion repeated. She rose from her seat, looked steadfastly for a moment at the gift as it lay on the table, placed her hand on her forehead, and flitted out of the room. The eye of the agent followed her from the window: her step was hurried, without an object of impulse. She might go—but whither? probably she knew not herself; yet on she sped till she was lost among the trees on the edge of the glen.

Thus longer time passed, but there seemed no change to Alice, save in the continual decrease of the frame, under the pressure of a mind that communed with the past, and only looked to the future as containing some day that would witness the termination of her sorrows. The anglers on the Lyne became familiar with her figure, for they had seen it on the heights, with her garments floating in the breeze, and had come up to her as she sat by the water side. But they passed on. At the worst she could be but one whose spirit was not settled enough to admit of her according with the ways of honest maidens; and they might regret that the beauty that still lurked amidst the ravages of the disease of the heart had not been turned to better account. It is thus that one part of mankind surveys another: they form their theory of a condition whose secret nature is only known to its possessor; draw their moral from false premises, formed as a compliment to their own conduct and situation, and pass on, to their pleasure.

Yet there occurred an important exception to these remarks:—One day Alice had taken up her seat on the banks of a small pond in front of the house of Whitecraigs. She sat opposite to the front of the dwelling, and seemed to survey its closed windows and deserted appearance, with the long grass growing up through the gravel of the walks—the broken pailings and decayed out-houses; a scene that might be supposed to harmonize with the feelings of a mind broken and desolate. There might seem even a consanguinity in the causes of the condition of both. The scene might have suited the genius of a Danby. There was no living creature to disturb the silence. The house of faded white, among the dark trees, cheerless and forsaken; the face of Alice Scott emaciated and pale, with the lustre of the loch, shining in the sun, reflected on it, directed towards the habitation of which she should have been mistress; her eyes, which had forgotten the relief of tears, fixed on the scene so pregnant with unavailing reminiscences—with these we would aid the artist.

But the charm was gone, as a voice sounded behind her. She started, and, according to her custom, would have fled as the hare that remembers the snare; but she was detained. A man, advanced in years, poorly clad, with hair well smitten with snow tints, and a staff in his hand, stood beside her, holding her by the skirt of the gown.

"I am weary," said he; "I have walked from Moffat, and would sit here for a time, if you would speak to me of the scenes and people of these parts." And the application of his hand again to her gown secured a compliance, dictated more by fear than inclination. She sat, while she trembled. "You are fair," continued he; "but my experience of sorrow tells me that grief has been busier with your young heart than years. I will not pry into your secrets. To whom does Whitecraigs now belong?"

The name had not been breathed by her to mortal since that day she had heard of the intended marriage. She made an effort to pronounce it, failed, and fixed her eyes on the pond. The stranger gazed on her, waiting for her reply.

"Hector Hayston," she at length muttered.

"And why has he left so fair a retreat to the desolation that has overtaken it?" rejoined he again. The question was still more unfortunate. She had no power to reply. Her face was turned from him, and repressed breathings heaved her bosom. "You may tell me, then, if one Dame Scott lives in these parts?" he said again, as he marked her strange manner, and probably augured that his prior question was fraught with pain.

"Yes—yes," she replied, with a sudden start, as if relieved from pain, while she regained her feet; "yonder lives my mother."

The stranger stood with his eyes fixed upon her, as if in deep scrutiny of the inexplicable features of her character and appearance; but he added not a word, till he saw her move as if she wished to be gone.

"You will go with me?" he said.

But the words were scarcely uttered, when she was away through the woods, leaving him to seek his way to the house of her mother, whither, accordingly, he directed his steps, from some prior knowledge he possessed of the locality about which he had been making inquiries. As he went along, he seemed wrapt in meditation—again and again looking back, to endeavour to get another sight of the girl, who was now seated on the edge of the stream, and again seized by some engrossing thought that claimed all the energies of his spirit. On coming up to the door of the cottage, he tapped gently with his long staff; and, upon being required by the dame to enter, he passed into the middle of the floor, and stood and surveyed the house and its inmate.

"I have nothing for you," said the latter; "so you must pass on to those whom God has ordained as the distributors of what the needy require. Alas! I am myself but a beggar."

The words seemed to have been wrung out of her by the meditative mood in which the stranger had found her; and, whether it was that the interest which had been excited in him by the appearance of the daughter had been increased by the confession of the mother, or that there was some secret cause working in his mind, he passed his hand over his eyes, and, for a moment, turned away his head.

"I have been both a beggar and a giver in my day," he replied, as he laid down his hat and staff, and took a chair opposite to the dame; "and I am weary of the one character and of the other. I have got with a curse; and I have given for ingratitude. But I may here give, and you may receive, without either. There is an unoccupied bed; I am weary of wandering, and have enough to pay for rest."

"That is better than charity," rejoined the dame—"ay, even the charity of the stranger."

"And why of the *stranger*, dame?" added he. "I have hitherto thought that the charity of *friends* was that which might be most easily borne. And who may be your benefactor?"

"Hector Hayston of Whitecraigs," replied she, hanging her head, and drawing a deep breath.

The stranger detected the same symptoms of pain in the mother as those he had observed in the daughter.

"Then forgets he not his cottars in his absence," he added. "But why has he left a retreat fairer than any I have yet seen throughout a long pilgrimage over many lands?"

"We will not speak of that," she replied, rising slowly, and going to the window, where she stood, for a time, in silence.

"You have a daughter, dame," resumed the man, as he watched the indications of movement in the heart of the mother. "I saw her sitting looking at the mansion of Whitecraigs. I fear she can lend you small aid; yet, if her powers of mind and body were equal to the beauty that has too clearly faded from her cheeks, methinks you would have had small need to have taken the charity of either friends or strangers."

"Ay, poor Alice! poor Alice!" rejoined the mother, turning suddenly, and applying her hand to something which required not her care at that time—"Ay, poor Alice!" she added.

"Is it a bargain, then," said he, wishing to retreat from a subject that so evidently pained her, "that I may remain here for a time, on your own terms of remuneration?"

"It may be as you say," replied she, again taking her seat; "but only on a condition."

"What is it?" inquired he.

"That you never mention the name of Hector Hayston, or of Whitecraigs, while Alice is by. She harms no one; and I would not see her harmed."

"I perceive," said he, muttering to himself, "that I am not the only one in the world who carries in his bosom a secret. But," he continued, in a louder tone, "your condition, dame, shall be fulfilled; and now I may hold myself to be your lodger." And he proceeded to take from the stuffed pockets of his coat some night-clothes of a homely character, and handed them to the dame. "And now," he said, "you may be, now or after, wondering who he may be who has thus come, like a weary bird from the waste that seeks refuge among the sere leaves, to live in the habitation of sorrow. But you must question me not; and, farther than my name, which is Wallace, you may know nothing of me till after the 29th day of September—ay, ay," he continued, as if calculating, "the 29th day of September."

The dame started as she heard the mention of the day, looked steadfastly at him, and was silent.

"Yes," he continued, "that day past, and I will once more draw my breath freely in the land of my fathers; and my foot, which has only bowed the head of the heather-bell in the valley, may yet collect energy enough from my unstrung nerves to press fearlessly the sod of the mountain. How long is it since your husband died?"

"Seven years," replied she.

"Well, short as our acquaintance has yet been," said he, "our words have been only of unpleasant things. Now, I require refreshment; and here is some small pay in advance, to remove the ordinary prejudice against strangers. We shall be better acquainted by times. I will take, now, what is readiest in the house; for you may guess, from my attire, that I have not been accustomed to that fare by which the poor contrive to spin out the weary term of their pilgrimage."

So much being arranged, the dame set about preparing a meal; and Mr Wallace, as he had called himself, proceeded to transform his staff into a fishing-rod, and arrange his other small matters connected with his future residence. When the humble dish was prepared, the dame went out, and, taking her position on a green tumulus that rose between the cottage and the Lyne, stood, and, placing her hands over her eyes, looked down the water. Her eye, accustomed to the search, detected the form of her daughter far down the stream, and, waving her hand to her, she beckoned her home. But she came not; and the two inmates sat down to their repast.

"This shall be for my poor Alice," said the mother, as she laid aside a portion of the frugal fare; "but she will take it at her own time, or perhaps not at all."

"And yet how much she needs it," added the stranger, "her wasted form and pale face too plainly shew."

"There is a sad change there, sir," rejoined she. "There was not a fairer or more gentle creature from Tweedscross to Tweedmouth than Alice Scott; nor did ever the foot of light-hearted innocence pass swifter over the hill or down the glen. You have seen her to-day where she is often to be seen—by the pond opposite the closed-up house of Whitecraigs—and may wonder to hear how one so wasted may still reach the hill-heads; yet there, too, she is sometimes seen. I have struggled sore to make her what she once was; but in vain. She will wander and wander, and return and wander again; nor will this cease till I some day find her dead body among the seggs of the Lyne, or in the lirk of the hill. When I know you better, I may tell you more. At present, I am eating the bread of one who is more connected with this sad subject than I may now confess; and I have never been accounted ungrateful."

The stranger was moved, and ate his meal in meditative silence. In an hour afterwards, Alice returned to the house, and, as she entered, started as her eye met that of him who had, by his questions, stirred to greater activity the feelings that were already too busy with her heart; but her fears were removed, by his avoidance of the subject which had pained her; and a few hours seemed to have rendered him as indifferent to her as seemed the other objects around her. Some days passed, and the widow would have been as well satisfied with her lodger as he was with her, had it not been that he enjoined secrecy as to his residence in the house—retiring to the spence when any one entered; and if at any time he went along the Lyne in the morning, he avoided those whom he met; and betook himself to private acts in the inner apartment during the day. At times, he left the cottage in the evening, and did not return for two days; but whither he went, the inmates knew not. The dame conjectured he had been as far as Peebles; but her reason was merely that he brought newspapers with him, and intelligence of matters transacting there. This secrecy was not suited to the open and simple manners to which she had been accustomed; but she recollected his words, that, on the 29th of September, she would know all concerning him. Now these words were connected by a chain of associations that startled her. The 29th of September had been set apart by her deceased husband as a day of prayer. He had never allowed it to pass without an offering of the contrite heart to God; this practice he had continued till his death, and she had witnessed the act repeated for fifteen years. She was no more superstitious than the rest of her class; she was, indeed, probably less so; and her theories, formed for an adequate explanation of the startling coincidence were probably as philosophical as if they had been formed by reason acting under the astute direction of scepticism. Yet where is the mind, untutored or learned, that can throw away at all times, at all hours—when the heart is in the sunshine of the cheerful day of worldly intercourse, or in the deep shadow of the wing of eternity—all thoughts of all powers save those of natural causes, which are themselves a mystery? We may sport with the subject; but it comes again back on the heart, and we sigh in whispering words of fear, that in the hands of God we are nothing.

One day Mr Wallace was seated at breakfast; he had been away for two nights; Alice was sitting by the side of the fire, looking into the heart of the red embers, and the mother was superintending the breakfast; he took

out a newspaper from his pocket, and, without a word of premonition, read a paragraph in a deep, solemn voice.

"Died at —— Street, London, Maria Knight, wife of Hector Hayston, Esq., of Whitecraigs, in the county of Peebles, in Scotland."

A peculiar sound struggled in the throat of Alice; but it passed, and she was silent. The mother sat and looked Wallace in the face, to ascertain what construction to put upon the occurrence which he had thus read with an emphasis betokening a greater interest than it might demand from one, as yet, all but ignorant, as she thought, of the true circumstances of the condition of her daughter. He made no commentary on what he had read; but looking again at the paper, and turning it over, as if searching for some other news, he fixed his eyes on an advertisement in the fourth page. He then read—

"On the 1st day of October next, there will be exposed to public roup and sale, within the Town-Hall of Peebles, by virtue of the powers of sale contained in a mortgage granted by Hector Hayston, Esq., of Whitecraigs, in favour of George Colville, of Haughton, all and hail the lands and estate of Whitecraigs, situated in the parish of ——, and shire of Peebles, with the mansion-house, offices, &c."

He then laid down the paper, and, looking the widow full in the face—

"The day of sale of Whitecraigs," said he, "is the *second* day after the 29th of September. It would have been too much had it been on that day itself."

No reply was made to his remark. The announcement called up in the mind of the dame more than she could express; but that which concerned more closely herself, was too apparently veiled with no mystery. The sale of Whitecraigs was the ejection of herself and daughter from Homestead; and she knew not whither she and her daughter were now to be driven to seek refuge and sustenance from a world to which she had been so long estranged.

"All things come to a termination," she said. "For many years I have lived here, wife and widow; and if I have felt sorrow, I have also enjoyed. The world is wide; and if I may be obliged to ask and to receive charity, the God who moves the hand to give it, may not again—now that His purpose may be served by my contrition—select that of the destroyer of my child. But there is another that must be taken from these haunts;" and, turning to Alice, whose face was still directed to the fire, she gazed on her hapless daughter while the tear stole down her cheeks.

Wallace's eye was fixed on the couple. He seemed to understand the allusion of the mother, which indicated plainly enough, that though the hills and glens of Whitecraigs had been the scene of the ruin of her daughter's peace, she anticipated still more fatal consequences from taking her away from them. Meanwhile, Alice, who had listened to and understood all, arose from her seat.

"I will never leave Whitecraigs, mother," she said; and bent her steps towards the door.

"Let her follow her fancy," said Wallace. Then relapsing into a fit of musing, he added—"the 29th of September of this year will soon be of the time that is. For twenty years I have looked forward to that day—under a burning sun, far from my native land, I have sighed for it—in the midnight hour I have counted the years and days that were between. Every anniversary was devoted to the God who has chastened the heart of the sinner; and there was need, when that heart was full of the thoughts inspired by that day, and penitence came on the wings of terror. Now it approaches; and I have not miscalculated the benefits it may pour on other heads than mine."

"Alas!" said the widow, as she cast her eye through the window after her daughter, "there is no appointed day for the termination of the sorrows of that poor creature. To the broken-hearted, one day as another, sunshine or shower, is the same. But what hand shall bear Alice Scott from Whitecraigs?"

"Perhaps none," replied Wallace, as, taking up the newspaper, he retired to an inner apartment, where he usually spent the day. Some hours passed; and, in the afternoon, Mr Pringle, while passing, took occasion to call at Homestead, and informed the widow that it would be her duty to look out for another habitation, as Whitecraigs was to be sold by the creditor, Mr Colville, whose object in granting the loan was, if possible, to take advantage of the difficulties into which extravagance had plunged the young proprietor, and to bring the property into the market, that he might purchase it as an appanage of the old estate of Haughton, from which it had been disjoined. He represented it as a cruel proceeding, and that its cruelty was enhanced by the circumstance of the sale being advertised in the same paper which contained the intelligence of the death of Hector's young wife. Another listener might have replied that God's ways are just; but Dame Scott, if she thought at the time of her daughter, considered also that Hayston had supported her for many years.

"Good dame," added the agent, "it might have been well for my young friend if he had remained at Whitecraigs. I never saw the wife he married and has just lost in the bloom of youth; but she must have been fair indeed, if she was fairer than she whom he left. Yet Hector's better principles did not, I am satisfied, entirely forsake him. The disinclination he has shewn to visit his paternal property, was the result of a clinging remembrance of her he left mourning in the midst of its glens; nor do I wonder at it, for even I have turned aside to avoid the sight of Alice Scott. Misfortunes, however, are sometimes mercies; and the change of residence you will be now driven to, may aid in the cure of a disease that is only fed by these scenes of Whitecraigs."

He here paused, and, putting his hand in his pocket, he took out some money.

"This may be the last gift," he said, as he presented it to her, "that Hector Hayston may ever send you. These are his words. His fortunes are ruined, his wife is dead, and, worse than all, his peace of mind is fled."

"Heaven have mercy on him!" replied the widow. "One word of reproach has never escaped the lips of me or my daughter. I have suffered in this cottage without murmuring, and the glens and hollows of Whitecraigs have alone heard the complainings of Alice Scott. She will cling to these places to the last; but were the windows of the deserted house again opened, with strange faces there, and maybe the lights of the entertainments of the happy shining through them, she might feel less pleasure in sitting by the pond from which she now so often surveys the deserted mansion. This last gift, sir, moves my tears—yea, for all I and mine have suffered from Hector Hayston."

The agent had performed his duty, and departed with the promise that he would, of his own accord, endeavour to prevail upon some of his employers to grant her a cottage, if the purchaser of Whitecraigs should resist an appeal for her to remain. He had no sooner gone, than the stranger Wallace, who had heard the conversation, entered. He asked her how much money Hector had sent as his last gift; and, on being informed—

"That young man," he said, "has fallen a victim to the allurements of a town life. The story of your daughter has been known to me; but I have avoided the mention of the name of Hayston, which could only have yielded pain without an amelioration of its cause. That gift speaks to me volumes. Even fashion has not sterilized the heart of that young man. He has erred—he may have transgressed—but for all, all, there is a 29th of September!"

The allusion he thus made was as inscrutable as ever. Again she reflected upon her husband's conduct upon that day of the year; and again, as she had done a hundred times, searched the face of the speaker. But she abstained from question; and the day passed, and others came, till the eventful morning was ushered in by sunshine. Wallace was up by times; and his prayers were heard directed to the Throne of Mercy, in thanks and heart-expressed contrition. In the forenoon he went forth with freedom, climbed the hills, and conversed with the anglers he met on the Lyne. He seemed as if relieved from some weighty burden; and the dame, who had carefully watched his motions, waited anxiously for the secret. He had not, however, pledged himself to reveal it on that day. He had only said that all would be made known some time after the day had passed; and, accordingly, he made no declaration. Yet, at bedtime, he was again engaged in prayers, and even during the night he was heard muttering expressions of thanksgiving to the Author of the day and what the day bringeth.

On the following morning, he announced his intention of going to Peebles, whither he was supposed to have gone before; but now his manner of going was changed. He purposed taking the coach, which, as it passed within some miles of Whitecraigs, he intended to wait for, and on de parting—

"You will not hear of me till to-morrow night," he said. "I can now face man; would that I could with the same confidence hold up my countenance to God. Alice Scott," he continued, as he looked to the girl, "I will not forget you in my absence. Your day of sorrow has been long; but there may yet be a 29th of September even to you."

And, taking the maiden kindly in his arms, he whispered some words in her ear, in which the magic syllables of a name she trembled to hear were mixed. Her eyes exhibited a momentary brightness, a deep sigh heaved her bosom, and again her head declined, with a whisper on her lips—"Never, O never!" In a moment after, he was gone; and the widow was left to ascertain from Alice, what he had said, to bring again, even for a moment, the blood to her cheek.

On the day after, there was a crowd of people in the Town-Hall of Peebles, and the auctioneer was reading aloud the articles of roup of the lands of Whitecraigs. Mr Colville was there in high hopes; but there were others too, who seemed inclined to disappoint them. The property was set up at the price of fifteen thousand pounds, and that sum was soon offered by the holder of the mortgage. Other bodes quickly followed, and a competition commenced which soon raised the price to eighteen thousand, at which it seemed to be destined to be given to Haughton. The other competitors appeared timid; and several declared themselves done, one by one, until no one was expected to advance a pound higher. All was silence, save for the voice of the auctioneer; and he had already begun his ominous once, twice, when a voice which had not been yet heard, cried—"Eighteen thousand, two hundred." The hammer was suspended, and all eyes turned to view the doughty assailant, who would, at the end of the day, vanquish the champion who had as yet retained the field. Those eyes recognised in the bidder a man poorly clothed, and more like an alms-seeker than the purchaser of an estate—no other was that man than Mr Wallace. The auctioneer looked at him; others looked and wondered; and Haughton gloomed, as he advanced another hundred; and that was soon followed by a hundred more, which led to a competition that seemed to be embittered on the one part by pride and contempt, and on the other by determination. Hundred upon hundred followed in rapid succession, till Haughton gave up in despair, and a shout rung through the hall as the hammer fell, and the estate was declared the property of the humble stranger, whom no one knew, and whom no one would have considered worth more than the clothes he carried on his back. A certificate of a banker at Peebles—that he held in his hands funds, belonging to the purchaser, of greater amount than the price—satisfied the judge of the roup; and the party were divided in circles, conversing on the strange turn which had been given to the sale of Whitecraigs.

On the same night, Wallace returned to Homestead, and sat down composedly to the humble meal that had been prepared for him by the widow. Alice was in her usual seat; and the placidity of manner which distinguished them from ordinary sufferers, spoke their usual obedience to the Divine will.

"This day the property of Whitecraigs has changed masters!" said he.

"And who has purchased it?" inquired the mother.

"He who is now sitting before you!" replied he.

Alice turned her head to look at him; the mother sat mute with surprise; while he rose and fastened the door.

"It is even so," he continued, as he again sat down; "David Scott, the brother of your husband, and the uncle of Alice, has this day purchased Whitecraigs."

A faint scream from the mother followed this announcement, and, recovering herself, she again fixed her eyes on the stranger.

"It is true," continued he; "I am the brother of your deceased husband. For two years after you were married to Adam, you would, doubtless, hear him speak of me, as then engaged in a calling of which I may now be ashamed, for I was one of the most daring smugglers on the Solway. The 29th of September, 17—, dawned upon me, yet with hands unsullied in the blood of man; but the sun of that day set upon me as proscribed by God and my country. My name was read on the house walls, and execration followed my steps, as I flew from cave to cave. Yet who could have told that that day in which my evil spirit wrought its greatest triumph over good, was that whose evening shades closed upon a repentant soul."

He paused, and placed his hand on his brow.

"These things are, to me, as an old dream," replied the widow, looking round her, as if in search of memorials of stationary space. "My husband never afterwards mentioned your name, save to inform me that you had died in the West Indies; yet now I see the import of his devotion, in the coming round of the day that shamed the honest family to whom he belonged."

"And it was to save that shame, and to secure my safety under my assumed name, that, after I flew to the islands of the west, I got intelligence of my death sent to Scotland. What other than the issue of this day must have been in the view of the great Disposer of Events, when, in addition to the grace he poured on the heart of the sinner, he invested the arm that had been lifted against his creatures with the prosperity that filled my coffers. But, alas! though I may have reason to trust to the forgiveness of heaven, that of man I may never expect."

"And punishment still awaits you?" rejoined she.

"No, no!" he cried, as he rose and placed his foot firmly on the floor. "I am free—the heart may hate me, the tongue may scorn me, the hand may point at me, but it dare not strike. On the 29th of September I was no longer amenable to the laws for the crime which drove me to foreign lands: twenty years free the culprit from the vengeance of man; the last day of that period was the 29th of September—it is past; and now God is my only judge." He again paused. "But I must live still as David Wallace. The name of Scott shall not be sullied by me. As David Wallace I have made my fortune, and as David Wallace made my supplications to heaven. By the same name I have bought Whitecraigs,

and by that name I shall make it over to one who may yet retrieve the honour of our humble house—to Alice, who should, through other means, have been mistress. Come to your natural protector, Alice, and tell him if you will consent to be the lady of Whitecraigs."

The girl, on whom the ordinary occurrences of life now seldom made any impression, had listened attentively to the extraordinary facts and intentions thus evolved; and, at his bidding, rose and stood by his side. He took her hand, and looked into her face.

"I knew," said he, "that I was pledged not to mention a certain name while you were by; and I kept my word, with the exception of the whisper I stole into your ear on the day I set out for Peebles. But things are now changed. The rights of Whitecraigs are now in the act of being made out in your name. Within a month you will be mistress of that mansion, and of these green dells and hills you have loved to wander among in joy and in sorrow. Now, will you answer me a question?"

"I will!" she replied.

"What would be your answer to Hector Hayston—who is now no longer a husband, and no longer rich—were he to come to Whitecraigs and make amends for all that is by and gone? Would you receive him kindly, or turn him from the door of the house of his fathers?"

The question was too sudden, or too touchingly devised. She looked, for a moment, in his face, burst into tears, and hid her face in his breast.

"Try her poor heart not thus." cried the mother. "Time, that as yet has done nothing but made ravages, may now, when things are so changed, work miracles. Do not press the question. A woman and a mother knows better than you can do what are now her feelings. The answer is not asked—Alice, your uncle has taken back his question!"

"I have—I have!" replied he, as he pressed her to his breast. Look up, my dear Alice. I have, in my pride and power, been hasty, and thought I could rule the heart of woman as I have done my own, even in its rebellion against God. I have yet all to learn of those secret workings of the spirit in all save repentance. I never myself knew what it was to love, far less what it is to love and be forsaken. No more—no more. I will not again touch those strings."

And, rising hurriedly, he consigned the maid to her mother, and went out to afford her time to collect again her thoughts. During the following week the furniture of Whitecraigs was disposed of by Mr Pringle, for behoof of the other creditors of Hayston, and purchased by the uncle, who took another journey to Peebles, for the purpose of negociating the sale, and making further preparations for obtaining entry. In a fortnight after, the keys were sent to Homestead by a messenger, while the making up of the titles was in the course of progress. It was no part of the intention of Wallace to reside in the mansion-house: his object was still secrecy; and, though the form and character of the transaction might lead ultimately to a discovery, he cared not. By the prescription of the crime he had committed, he was free from punishment; while, by retaining his name, and living ostensibly in a humble condition, he had a chance of escaping a detection of his true character, at the same time that he might, by humility and good services, render himself more acceptable to that Great Power whose servant he now considered himself to be.

On the twenty-first day of October, the house of Whitecraigs was again open. Servants had been procured from Peebles; the fires were again burning; the wreaths of smoke again ascended from among the trees; and life and living action were taking the place of desertedness. On the forenoon of that day, Wallace took the two females from Homestead, and conducted them, hanging on his arms, to their new place of residence. To speak of feelings where a change comprehended an entire revolution of a life, of habit, thought, and sentiment, would be as vain as unintelligible. From that day, when the uncle had put the trying question to his niece, a change might have been detected working a gradual influence on her appearance and conduct. Might we say that hope had again lighted her taper within the recesses where all had been so long dreary darkness? The change would not authorize an affirmative—it would have startled the ear that might have feared and yet loved the sounds. One not less versed in human nature might be safer in the construction derived from the new objects, new duties, new desires, new thoughts, from all the thousand things that act on the mind in this wonderful scene of man's existence; but would he be truer to the nature of the heart that has once loved? We may be contented with a mean where extremes shoot into the darkness of our mysterious nature. Alice Scott took in gradually the interests of her new sphere; did not despise the apparel suited to it; did not reject the manners that adorned it; did not turn a deaf ear or a dead eye to the eloquent ministers that lay around amidst the beauties of Whitecraigs and hailed her as mistress, where she was once a servant, if not a beggar.

Meanwhile, the house of Homestead was enlarged, to fit it as a residence for the uncle. Mr Pringle was continued agent for the proprietress of Whitecraigs; and, while many, doubtless, speculated on a thousand theories as to these strange occurrences, we may not deny to Hector Hayston, wherever he was, or in whatever circumstances, some interest in what concerned him so nearly as the disposal of his estate, and the fortune of her by whom his first affections had been awakened. Neither shall we say that Wallace and Pringle had not, too, their secret views and understandings, and that the latter was not silent where the interests of his old employer called for confidence. In all which we may be justified by the fact that, one day, the agent of Whitecraigs introduced to the bachelor of Homestead a young man: it was the former proprietor of Whitecraigs.

"It is natural, Mr Wallace," said Mr Pringle, "that one should wish to revisit the scenes of his youth—especially," he added, with a smile, "when these have been one's own property, come from prior generations, and lost by the thoughtlessness of youth."

"It is," replied Wallace, renouncing his usual gravity, "even though there should be no one there who might claim the hand of old friendship. But this young man has only, as yet, seen the hill-tops of his father's lands; and these claim no seclusion from the eye of the traveller. He might wish, with greater ardency, to see the bed where his mother lay when she bore him, or the cradle (which may still be in the house) where she rocked him to sleep."

"God be merciful to me!" replied the youth, as he turned away his head. "This man touches strings whose vibrations harrow me. Sir," he added, "did you even yourself in the situation of him with whose feelings you have thus, from good motives, quickened so painfully."

"What Whitecraigs and she who lives now in the house yonder were or are to you, Scotland and my kindred were to me; but the house where I was born knows me not, and the bed and the cradle do not own me. But Alice Scott recognised me as a fellow-creature, whatever more I say not; and even that, from one so good, and even yet, so beautiful—is something to live for. No more. I know all. Will you risk a meeting?"

"Mr Pringle will answer for me," replied he, as he turned, with a full heart, to the window.

"And I will answer for Mr Pringle," said Wallace.

"But who will answer for *her*?" rejoined the other.

"Stay there," said Wallace. "I will return in a few minutes."

And, bending his steps to Whitecraigs House, he was, for a time, engaged with Alice and her mother. He again returned to Homestead; and, in a few minutes after, the three were walking towards the mansion. The eye of the young man glanced furtively from side to side, as if to catch glimpses of old features which had become strange to him; but in the direction of the house he seemed to have no power to look—lagging behind, and displaying an anxiety to be concealed, by the bodies of the others, from the view of the windows. On arriving at the house, Wallace and Pringle went into an apartment where the mother was seated. Hector stood in the passage: he feared that Alice was there, and would not enter.

"Think you," whispered Wallace, quickly returning to him, "that I, whom you accused of touching tender chords, am so little acquainted with human nature as to admit of witnesses to your meeting with Alice Scott. There, the green parlour, in the west wing," he continued, pointing up the inside stair to a room well known to the youth. If you cannot effect it, who may try? Go—go!"

"I cannot—I cannot!" he replied, in deep tones. "My feet will not carry me. That room was my mother's favourite parlour. A thousand associations are busy with me. And now, who sits there?"

"Come, come!" said Pringle, as he came forth, in consequence of hearing Hayston's irresolution. "What did you expect on coming here? Alice to come and fly to you with open arms?"

"No, sir; to reject me with a wave of disdain!" replied the youth. "I am smitten from within, and confidence has left me. Let me see her mother first. My cruelty to her has been mixed with kindness, and she may give me some heart."

And he turned to the apartment where the mother sat.

"Your confidence will not be restored by anything the mother can say!" rejoined Pringle who was getting alarmed for the success of his efforts. "Alice is now mistress here, and must be won by contrition, and a prayer for forgiveness."

"Ho!" interjected Wallace. "To what tends this mummery? Must I take you by the hand, and lead you to one who, for years, has seen you in every flitting shade of the hills, and heard you in every note of the sighing winds of the valley?"

"To hate me as I deserve to be hated!" replied Hayston, still irresolute. "None of you can give me any ground for hope, and seem to push me on to experience a rejection which may seal my misery for ever!"

Wallace smiled in silence, beckoned Pringle into the room beside the mother, and, taking Hayston by the arm, with a shew of humour that accorded but indifferently with the real anguish of doubt and dismay by which the young man's mind was occupied, forced him on to the first step of the inside stair.

"You are now fairly committed!" said he, smiling: "to retreat, is ruin; to advance, happiness, and love, and peace."

And he retreated to the room where Pringle was, leaving the youth to the strength or weakness of his own resolution. His tread was now heard, slow and hesitating, on the stair. Some time elapsed before the sound of the opening door was heard; and that it remained for a time open, held by the doubtful hand, might also have been observed. At last it was shut; and quick steps on the floor indicated that the first look had not been fraught with rejection.

The party below were, meanwhile, speculating on the result of the meeting. Even the mother was not certain that it would, at first, be attended with success. Alice had yielded no consent; and it was only from the mother's construction of her looks that she had given her authority for the interview.

"All is now decided, for good or for evil," said Wallace. "Go up stairs, and bring us a report of the state of affairs."

The mother obeyed; and, after a considerable time, returned, with her eyes swimming in tears.

"Is it so?" said her friend. "Is it really so? Has all my labour been fruitless?"

"No," replied she; "but I could not stand the sight. I found her lying on the breast of Hector, sobbing out the sorrows of years. Her eyes have been long dry. The heart is at last opened."

"Too good a sight for me to lose," replied her friend. "For twenty years I have only known the tears of penitence: I will now experience those that flow from the happiness of others."

And, with these words, he hurried up stairs. We would follow, but that we are aware of the danger of treading ground almost forbidden to inspiration. Within two hours afterwards, Hector Hayston and Alice Scott were again among the glens of Whitecraigs, seeking out those places where, before, they used to breathe the accents of a first affection. The one had been true to the end; and the other had been false only to learn the beauty of truth. We have given these details from a true record, and have derived pleasure from the recollections they have awakened; but we fairly admit that we would yield one half of what we have experienced of the good to have marked that day the workings of the retrieved spirit in the eyes, and speech, and manners of Alice Scott. These are nature's true magic. The drooping flower that is all but dead in the dry, parched soil, raises its head, takes on fresh colours, and gives forth fresh odours, as the spring-showers fall on its withered leaves. There is a magic there that escapes not even the eye of dull labour, retiring home sick of all but the repose he needs. But the process in the frame that is the temple of beauty, worth, intelligence, sensibility, rearing all in loveliness afresh, out of what was deemed the ruins only of what is the greatest and best of God's works—to see this, and to feel it, is to rejoice that we are placed in a world that, with all its elements of vice and sorrow, is yet a place where the good and the virtuous may find something analogous to that for which the spirit pants in other worlds.

Yet, though we saw it not, we have enough of the conception, through fancy, to be thankful for the gift even of the *ideal* of the good; and here we are satisfied that we have more. Hector Hayston and Alice Scott were married. David Wallace's history was long concealed, but curiosity finally triumphed; yet with no effect calculated to impair the equanimity of a mind to which repentance, and a reliance on God's grace, had long rendered independent of the opinions of men. He had wrought for evil, and good came of it; and lived long to see, in the house of Whitecraigs, its master, mistress, and children, the benefits of the prescription which the 29th of September effected—a principle of the law of Scotland that was long deemed inconsistent with the good of the land, but now more properly considered as being no less in unison with the feelings of man than it is with Divine mercy.

WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE DISCHARGED EXCISEMAN.

THE principal object we have in view, in placing the following narrative of facts before the reader, is to present him with an illustration of the wonder-working powers of perseverance, more especially when associated with that indomitableness of spirit which no rebuff can check in its onward career, and over which no idle feeling of false delicacy or *mauvais honte*, as the French call it, is ever permitted to exercise the smallest control.

From the tenor of these abstract remarks on the valuable quality above-named, it will at once be seen that we allude to its exercise or developement in the case of an individual pushing his way in the world. We do so; and that individual—the individual whom, to use a phrase sanctioned by the usages of that august body, the House of Commons, "we have in our eye"—was Mr John Thorburn, officer of Excise.

Perseverance—to return for a moment to the starting note of our tune—reared the pyramids of Gizah; perseverance dyked *in* the Dutch, and dyked *out* the sea; perseverance built the great wall of China; and perseverance restored John Thorburn to his situation in the Excise: a situation which he had lost, as he himself declared, without a shadow of reason, but, as others said, in consequence of his indulging to excess in a certain fanciful predilection for ardent spirits. Be this, however, as it may, certain it is that, in the year of grace 17—, John was discharged from the service of the Excise, and equally certain is it that, in little more than a year thereafter, he was again restored to all the honours, privileges, emoluments, &c., &c., of that body from which he had been temporarily expelled.

It is, then, the history of Mr Thorburn's restoration, or rather of the manner in which he accomplished this memorable achievement, to which we intend devoting the following pages. Before doing this, however, it may both enlighten and amuse the reader a little, to give him a preliminary sketch of the distinguishing physical and moral characteristics which usually mark the unfortunate class to which Mr Thorburn for a time belonged: we mean discharged officers of Excise. These do not form a very numerous body; yet, certain special opportunities having been afforded us of seeing a considerable number of them, we have been impressed with the belief that they exhibit—speaking of them generally—such a series of uniform peculiarities as entitles them to be viewed as a separate and distinct class, and as such we will endeavour to present them to the reader.

We beg, however, most distinctly to state that our description by no means applies to *every* individual placed in the unhappy circumstances alluded to, but merely to a particular portion of them. This we are the more anxious to impress on the reader, that we know that many worthy and respectable men have been subjected, by the commission of some very venial error, propably some trivial omission, to the misfortune of dismissal from the service, or to temporary suspension. These, therefore, will not consider anything we are about to say as bearing reference to them, but will, on the contrary, themselves assist in putting the saddle on the right horse. *Our* men are not of them.

As might be expected, the outward man—the toggery of the discharged Exciseman—very soon begins to exhibit the consequences of a sudden extinguisher being placed on a man's resources. It is there that the first and most palpable signs of his altered condition are made manifest. His personal appearance is most decidedly shabby, and, moreover, most mysteriously equivocal; for, unless you guess him to be what he really is, which, however, you may readily do, you will not be able to assign him to any particular calling; you will not be able to classify him: he will, in short, puzzle you. *We*, however, know him at once when we see him. We would pick him out of a thousand.

As the chances are at least, on the average of a hundred to ten, that this worthy has been discharged in consequence of dissipation, his florid countenance bears strong evidence of this elegant and elevating propensity; and, if you should be disposed to doubt this testimony to his habits, the alcaholic aroma of his breath will put the fact beyond all question. He always smells powerfully of strong drink; and is in a constant state, not of absolute drunkenness, but of either maudlin inebriety, or of fierce excitation, according as his natural temperament be choleric or composed.

It may be matter for wonder where a person so circumstanced as him whom we are describing finds the means of keeping up his steam; meaning thereby, the necessary supply of stimulant. Those, however, who know his ways can account for this. They know that, for a certain length of time after his dismissal, he continues to enjoy the hospitality of the various traders whom he surveyed when doing duty. This hospitality, like the undulations produced on still water by the violent immersion of some foreign substance, remaining in active motion for some time after the original impetus has ceased.

The advantage, however, being, in this case, all on one side, it cannot be supposed that such a state of things will continue very long. They, in fact, do not. The trader gradually begins to turn the cold shoulder towards his *ci-devant* officer, till, unkindest cut of all, he finally permits him to depart after a visit, without *offering anything*—that is, without producing his bottle. This is felt severely; and when it happens in a case where the confiding unfortunate believed he had a friend, and not merely a trader, well may he exclaim, when he sees no meridian forthcoming—"*Et tu brute!*" It is a saddening proof of the hollowness of friendship. When this treatment becomes anything like general, the game may be considered up, the field exhausted, and some new scene of operations becomes a desideratum.

For some little time, however, after his misfortune, the hospitality of which we have been speaking is fully more active and cordial even than when the object of it was in the discharge of his duty. There is a sympathy excited in his behalf, which gives it a warmth, and adds to it some other pleasing features, which do not characterise its expression in ordinary circumstances. But this, as already said, does not last long. The sympathy, by constant

stretching, gets attenuated, till it becomes no thicker than a spider's thread, and the unfortunate himself gradually becomes a bore.

While the feeling above alluded to *does* last, however—that is, for some weeks after the dismissed public servant has been in possession of his mittimus—he leads, contrary to what might be expected, a merry, festive life of it. He has to call on everybody to tell how shockingly he has been used; and everybody, in turn, meets his dismal story with condolence and a *caulker*. He has to call again to say what he intends to do; and thereafter, daily, to say what he is doing. And thus, for about the time we have specified, a continual round of small but very pleasant festivities is kept up between the dismissed official and his friends; the former being the gainer, while the thing lasts, by the difference between intelligence and entertainment.

When any individual of the particular class of public servants of whom we are speaking is first discharged from his situation—that is, immediately after his receiving such discharge—he is in a state of high indignation: if of a very fierce temperament, he is absolutely rabid; he threatens, especially when drunk, ruin and destruction to all concerned in his misfortune; he will move heaven and earth in his behalf; he will destroy the supervisor, the immediate author of his ruin, for he knows of things concerning him that would dismiss fifty supervisors; he will destroy the collector who supported the supervisor, for him too he has in his power; he will make the Board of Excise tremble in their seats, or, as we once actually heard one, an Aberdonian, say, "Shak in their sheen;" he will astound the Lords of the Treasury with the enormity of the Board's conduct in discharging him; he will, through the agency of some influential M.P., make the walls of parliament resound with the story of his hardships—until the sympathy of a whole nation shall be excited in his behalf. All men will stand aghast when they hear of *his* case, and will hold up their hands in horror and amazement, and say, "Was ever the like heard tell of!"

By and by, however, this violence of tone, this blood-thirstiness gradually subsides. The bold, outspoken, and ferocious threats, of which, of course, nothing ever comes, gradually sink into unintelligible mutterings and dark insinuations, or are expressed in ominous shaking of the head. The threatened vengeance, however, is still forthcoming; it will descend on some fine sunshiny day, when it is least expected; but it is now wrapt in mystery, and no man is to know when, where, how, or in what shape the impending blow, or rather series of blows, is to be stricken.

After being discharged, the one great object of the unfortunate revenue officer, is to get restored again. This becomes, naturally, the all-engrossing subject of his contemplation—the prime mover in all he says and does—the vital principle of all his efforts and exertions; and in pursuit of this darling object he is indefatigable. He applies, right and left, to all who will listen to him; and writes letters, petitions, and memorials, by the dozen. This latter, however, is mere manual labour; for, except in the matter, perhaps, of some little diversity as to form, they are all copies of each other—the same thing over again. An *original*—that is, the first draught of the unfortunate's case—drawn up, in all probability, by some one more expert at composition than himself, and presenting itself in the shape of a dirty, square-folded, and much-handled scrap of paper, may be seen in the midst of a huge accumulation of documents of all sorts; but yet, all relating to the one great thing, which the progress of the struggling revenue officer's efforts have concentrated in a certain greasy, black leather pocket-book, which he wears in a capacious side-pocket, and which he is always ready to produce on the slightest interest or curiosity being expressed in his case, and often without either the one or the other. There, in the centre of them, lies, like a nest-egg, the original paper, above described, from whence all the others are hatched. With this original he would not part for any consideration, for it is the capital on which he works, or expects to work out his restoration. It is the great source whence he draws all that he desires to say, or can say, on the subject. Without it, he could do nothing.

We have just hinted at the quantity of papers, of various kinds, which our friend gathers around him: this is truly amazing. At first, his stock of this commodity is sufficiently slender—consisting, perhaps, only of the great original above spoken of, a copy of a petition sent to the Board, and a letter or two from some influential persons, whom he sought to interest in his behalf; but who, with great politeness, and probably some expressions of regret, declined all interference in the matter: adding to these the copies of the letters which he addressed to the influential persons in question, and you have, very likely, his entire stock of documentary gear at the outset of his great struggle for restoration. But how these do increase as the warfare goes on! There are, finally, at least twenty copies of twenty petitions to the Board; half as many copies of half as many petitions to the Treasury; then there are copies without number of letters without number, which have been addressed to official persons in power; then there are the answers to these letters; then there are attestations of character, all representing the person to whom they refer as one of the most worthy and deserving men that ever lived; then there are recommendations, couched in the strongest terms, from provosts and bailies, in which the writers seem ready to sacrifice the interests of themselves and families to forward the views of the object of their solicitude. With all these, then, and many more of a similar kind, is the greasy pocket-book above alluded to, crammed, till, becoming too bulky for that receptacle, they are transferred to the crown of the hat, which we have observed, in many instances, to be with such persons as we speak of, a favourite repository for their epistolary correspondence. We have ourselves seen a hat filled to within three inches of the brim with papers of this description; and have known that it was so before being assured of the fact by ocular demonstration by the light, lofty, and jaunty air with which the said hat sat on the head of the wearer.

Now, good reader, let us here pause a moment to give you a little piece of advice in intimate connection with our subject. Avoid, as you value your time, your equanimity, your everything of that sort, all correspondence with such a person as we have been describing. Avoid meeting him as you would avoid a pestilence; otherwise, mark what will be the consequence! When, and wherever he meets you—that is, if he can claim the slightest acquaintance with you, he will insist on your listening to the story of his woes, principle, accessory, digression, and amplification. He will next cast off his surcharged hat; and, digging out, from the mass of papers it contains, document after document, present them to you for perusal—enticing you to the interesting task by some such running commentaries as—"Here, you see, Mr ——, is a copy of a petition I sent off, on the 25th of last month, to the Board; and here, you see, is the answer I got. They'll do nothing. But here's a letter from Lord Wingfield; see, look at that—a very kind letter, in which he promises to do all he can for me. Now, here's another from Provost Blaikie, in answer to one I sent him on the 14th, in which, you'll see, he says that he'll speak to a friend of his, who knows a gentleman, who knows Commissioner Eelwood; so I hope for a lift in that quarter. Now, if these should fail me here's a copy of a petition that I intend to send up to the Treasury, and in which I expect to be supported by Mr

Ronaldson, the Member for Garngad, who says here, you see, in *this* letter, that he'll have much pleasure in doing all in his power for me"—&c., &c., &c.

Now, dear reader, this is what awaits you, if you scorn the advice we have given you. Pray you, then, avoid, of all things, a discharged Exciseman—especially when he is fresh in hope, and still rampant in the exciting anticipations of a speedy restoration—that is, in other words, before the edge is taken off him by disappointment and delay. When subdued by these, he may be approached with comparative safety.

Having thus placed fully and fairly before the reader the *class* to which our hero belonged, we will now proceed to narrate the facts connected with the case of that individual, in which we have rested our hopes of both instructing and amusing him.

At the time of his discharge, John Thorburn was doing duty, or rather doing nothing, at the expense of his most gracious Majesty, George III., in a certain distant island in the west of Scotland. In this island John had been located for several years; and, during all that time, had scarcely ever seen the face of a superior officer; the place being so wild, solitary, and remote, and so utterly destitute of every excisable commodity, and, indeed, of everything else, except rocks and heather, that no one ever thought of going near it. John seemed thus to be all but entirely overlooked by his official superiors, and, as was perhaps natural, John, in time, seemed to have become equally oblivious of them. He appeared, in truth, to feel himself perfectly independent, and to have entirely forgotten that he was amenable to the control of others.

Although, however, thus left to "waste his sweetness on the desert air," there came regularly to John, at quarter-day, a pleasing remembrancer, in the shape of a pecuniary remittance from the collector, to reconcile John to the banishment to which he was doomed. Yet was this banishment not, after all, very irksome to the solitary Exciseman. He was, in the words of Selkirk, "monarch of all he surveyed." Free as the mountain breeze was John, with none to say to him "Whence comest, or where goest thou?"

Thus situated, Mr Thorburn, as will readily be believed, had a good deal of spare time on his hands; and this time he devoted, with great zeal and assiduity, to the cultivation of a taste for mountain dew, and to the practice of the art of drinking it, in which, as might be expected, he became an adept.

Things thus went on smoothly enough with John for many years; but, alas! a day of count and reckoning came. One fine sunny day, in the month of August 17—, a King's cutter, having on board two general officers of Excise, sailed into the bay of ——. John saw the cruiser approaching, and guessed that mischief would ensue. He had had, as we have already said, little to do; next to nothing; yet that little had not been done. A few entries, now and then, in a long, red-ruled, parchment-bound book, was all that was required of him; yet that book he had not opened, far less put a pen in it, for a twelvemonth.

It was, in truth, at the time of the visit of the general officers above alluded to, as clean as the day he got it.

Guessing then, as we have said, that there would be mischief, John, on seeing the general officers step into the cutter's boat to come on shore, took to the hills like a goat, in the hope that if he could but keep out of the way until the cruiser left the bay, he would be safe, and that he would again be permitted to slip out of the memory of man.

In this hope, then, as we have said, John took to the mountains, carrying the fatal book along with him; for he well knew, if that were found in the virgin state in which it was, his ruin was certain, even without any personal intercourse with his most unwelcome visiters. These visiters, however, were not thus to be baffled. John's flight exciting their suspicions, they dispatched half-a-dozen of the cutter's crew after him, armed to the teeth, with orders to bring back John dead or alive; or, at all events, to get hold of his books. A spirited chase was the immediate consequence of this proceeding. John, who got an early sight of his pursuers, flew up the rocky heights like a chamois, while the less experienced sailors scrambled after him the best way they could.

The chase, which was seen distinctly from the village below, presented a very exciting and edifying spectacle to the inhabitants, and also to the general officers, who looked with much interest on this specimen of hunting an Exciseman. The gentlemen had never seen such a thing before, and thus thought it rather a curious sight.

In the meantime, John was holding on his way gallantly. He was clearing obstacles of all sorts at an amazing rate, and the sailors were tumbling after him like so many porpoises.

It was, however, evident, that they would never overtake the flying Exciseman by speed of foot; and that, therefore, the latter must eventually effect his escape. To this opinion all had come, when the report of a pistol suddenly fell on the ears of the onlookers—the pistol had been fired by one of John's pursuers, not with the intention of hurting him, but, in nautical phrase, merely to bring him to.

It had the desired effect. John was seen to stand fast, and to allow the cutter's men to approach within a certain distance of him. He was then seen to throw something towards them, and again to take to his heels. It was the fatal book which he had resigned; and it was his personal safety he sought in resuming his flight.

Satisfied with obtaining the former, and heartily tired of the chase, the cutter's men now drew off and returned with their prize.

In about six weeks after, or somewhat less, Mr John Thorburn received a hint that his future services would be dispensed with, in the shape of a formal discharge.

The occurrence was rather a damper in its way, and John felt it to be so. He saw that it would seriously interrupt those little, convenient periodical remittances, which had been wont to come like visions of beauty, to cheer the solitude of his lonely residence; but John was a man of spirit, a man of activity and enterprise, of unconquerable perseverance, and one not easily to be floored or turned aside from his purpose. He had, in fact, a genius for annoyance, where he had any end to accomplish, which no human fortitude could withstand. This quality had often stood him in good steed before; and he determined, on the present occasion, that it should do so again. He knew where his strength lay; he knew that it lay in his knowledge of the art of tormenting, of boring, annoying, of keeping steadily to his purpose, in defiance of all rebuffs; of returning, again and again, to the charge, however often he might be driven back or defeated. Fully aware of all this, and fully determined on putting it all in practice on the present occasion, Mr Thorburn, soon after receiving his discharge, repaired to the low country, the intended scene of his future operations, and commenced, with great vigour and spirit, that series of proceedings by which he hoped to accomplish his restoration to his Majesty's service.

As, amongst his other qualifications, Mr Thorburn held the pen of a ready, although, perhaps, not very elegant writer, he was soon over head and ears in a most interesting correspondence in a dozen different quarters at once.

For some time, John's pocket-book, with the aid of a piece of cord, held conveniently enough all the letters and

other documents which his industry had brought into his possession; but it was not long; they soon became too numerous and bulky for this depository; and, on doing so, were transferred to the usual receptacle in such cases—the crown of the hat—in which was finally accumulated a number and variety which would have done credit to the business habits of a Secretary of State.

Let us here pause a moment to do what we should, perhaps, have done before—that is, to present to the reader certain peculiarities of conduct and character in which Mr Thorburn differed from the generality of his brethren in misfortune. Unlike these, John blustered none. He threatened vengeance to nobody; and said nothing at all about being ill-used. He took a wiser and a better course; he kept quiet; walked warily and silently through the various processes of appeal and supplication, and maintained a noiseless but steady pressure against the opposing influence that stood in the way of his success. Having advised the reader of these particulars, we proceed.

On John's arrival in Glasgow, which was the first position he took up on his reaching the Lowlands, he opened the campaign by calling on the Collector of Excise there, a gentleman with whom he claimed some acquaintanceship. This claim, indeed, was founded on the most slender grounds imaginable; so slender, that no man, certainly, but John Thorburn, would, for a moment, have thought them sufficient to warrant the slightest liberty of any kind; but John was no sticker at trifles. All that he wanted was an opening. Give him that, and the rest was easy. Nothing more was then required but pressure; gentle but steady, and gradually increasing in power. From this point, however, John's proceedings will, we imagine, be placed before the reader in their most striking light, by exhibiting their operation and general results and effects on those who were dragged or entrapped within the sphere of their influence. Adopting, then, this mode of conducting our story, we proceed to say that, on a certain morning in the month of August 17—, a stout, thickset man, of florid countenance, dressed in a rusty black coat, with a very dirty white neckcloth twisted—not tied—round his neck, a pair of threadbare, and otherwise grievously dilapidated inexpressibles, which were, besides, at least six inches too short for the wearer, a pair of small, pinched, worn-out drab gaiters, with metal buttons, waistcoat pinned up to the throat, and carrying a huge stick under his arm, was seen wending his way towards the Excise Office, which was then in Argyle Street. On reaching the office, this person inquired of the official porter or constable, who was standing at the door, whether the collector was within. He was informed that he was.

"Could I see him for a moment?" said the stranger.

The porter hesitated a reply, and employed the time occupied by this hesitation in scanning his customer, which he did with a somewhat suspicious sort of air. At length, however, he replied to the query just put to him, that he supposed he might; and, pointing to the door of the collector's private apartment, added that he would find him there. The stranger now advanced to the door in question, and delivered a couple of gentle taps.

"Come in," exclaimed a voice from within.

The stranger whipped off his battered hat with one hand, opened the door with the other, and, bowing and smiling winningly, entered the presence of the collector. The latter eyed him with a look of horror and dismay; for he knew his man—not personally—but he knew at once the class to which he belonged, and more than anything on earth did he dread that class; for they had been the bane and torment of his life. Individuals of them had assailed and persecuted him at all hours and in all places—even the privacy of his home had they violated—to bore him with solicitations for aid and advice. Overlooking, however, the cold and even stern air with which he was received, the stranger continued his bowing and smiling.

"Well, sir," said the collector, inquiringly, and contemplating his visiter with a look of non-recognition.

"You don't recollect me, sir, I dare say?" said the latter, whose breath, the collector now felt, smelt strongly of ardent spirits. The visiter had evidently had his *morning*. "You don't recollect me, sir?" he said, in his softest tones, and with a mingled air of deference and familiarity. "My name's John Thorburn, sir, late officer of Excise, in the island of ——."

"Oh, ay," replied the collector, drily.

"You'll have heard of my misfortune, sir?" said John.

"I have, Mr Thorburn," replied the collector, gravely.

"Well, sir, I have just taken the liberty to call upon you, to ask your advice regarding some attempts I mean to make to get restored again;" and here, to the great horror of the collector, who knew it to be a forerunner of long-enduring and relentless persecution, John placed his hat and stick on the floor; and, when freed of these incumbrances—"Here, sir," he continued, and now plunging his hand into a side-pocket, from whence he drew a parchment-covered pocket-book, secured with a bit of red tape—"here, sir, is a draught of a petition to the Board, which I would be obliged to you to look over," (untying the pocket-book, and extracting the letter referred to;) "and here is a letter to Lord Annandale's factor; and here's a"——

"Really—really, Mr Thorburn!" here exclaimed the alarmed collector, hastily seizing Mr Thorburn by the arm, to arrest his progress in this appalling delivery, "I cannot spare time to look at all these papers; nor would it serve any good end whatever, although I could, for I cannot possibly be of the smallest assistance to you."

"Very true, sir—very true, I dare say," replied Mr Thorburn, without the smallest discomposure; "but just be so good, then, sir, as look over the petition;" and, without waiting for any reply—indeed before any reply could be made—he had unrolled, on a table just below the nose of the doomed collector, a paper a yard long, and written as close as print, from top to bottom.

The collector, who was, in the main, a good-natured person, looked with dismay on the tremendous document, and made some desperate, but vain efforts to escape the martyrdom of reading it. But John was not to be *done* in this way. He pressed, entreated, and cajoled, with all the deference and respect imaginable, till his victim, seeing no other means of escape, at length commenced the weary task imposed on him. The collector fairly read out the petition; and, when he had done so, he found that it contained a history not only of the particular case in which Mr Thorburn was at the moment interested, but of his whole life, from the time he left school up to "this present writing." The writer, Mr Thorburn himself, seemed, indeed, from some expressions in the petition, if such it could be called, to have been in doubt whether he should not also have edified the Honourable Board of Excise with a history of his birth and parentage, interspersed with anecdotes of his ancestors—his grandfather's and grandmother's included; but some suspicions of the irrelevancy of such matters had eventually deterred him from entering on these interesting topics. It had, however, evidently been the toss up of a halfpenny whether they should be introduced or not. On the collector's finishing the perusal of this instructive document—

"Do you think it'll do, sir?" said John.

"Oh, I dare say. But isn't it *rather* long, Mr Thorburn?" replied the collector. "I think you might, with great advantage, curtail it by three-fourths, at least, and still further improve it, by abridging the remainder. Now, Mr Thorburn, you must really excuse me. I am very

busy, and cannot spare another minute from my own business," added the collector, beginning to bustle among some papers, in the vain hope of hinting his visiter away.

"Well, sir, I dare say," replied Mr Thorburn. "But would you just be so good as draw your pen through those parts of my petition which you think I ought to suppress. It will be a great kindness, collector."

"No, really, Mr Thorburn," replied the latter, now getting out of all patience with his visiter, "I must at once decline all further interference in your affair. I have not time; and I again beg to say, that I cannot, in any way, be of the smallest service to you. Good morning—good morning, Mr Thorburn!" and the collector, who had been stealthily preparing for a retreat, seeing no other way of escaping his tormentor, fairly bolted out of the room, leaving Mr Thorburn in full possession of the field.

Without being in the least discomposed by this unceremonious treatment, the latter, on being left to himself, deliberately drew a chair towards the table, and began, with great calmness and circumspection, to fold up the various documents which he had turned out for the collector's edification. This done, he placed them methodically in his pocket-book, threw a running knot on the bit of red tape by which it was secured, thrust it into its receptacle—a side-pocket—picked up his hat and stick, and *then* walked, with great composure, out of the office.

"Andrew," said the collector to the office-porter, on returning and finding the coast clear, "have not I told you fifty times never to admit such persons as he who was here just now, without, at least, giving me previous notice—without getting their names? The annoyance is intolerable. You should know them by head-mark by this time, Andrew."

"So I think I do, sir," replied Andrew; "but I maun confess, although I had my suspicions, I was bitten by that ane. I thocht he was a sma tredder come to pay duties; a bit Caunlemaker frae the town-head; or an informer frae Stockiemuir. But I'll look sharper next time, sir."

"Do so, Andrew. For any sake do so," replied the collector, passing into his own apartment, and resuming the labours which Mr Thorburn's visit had interrupted.

If this gentleman, however, hugged himself in the idea—which, by the way, his knowledge of his men renders improbable—that he had got entirely rid of Thorburn by the summary process he had adopted, he was greatly mistaken, as an incident, which occurred on the following morning, sufficiently proved. On this morning, he was fairly waylaid, as he was going from his own house to the Excise Office, by a personage in drab gaiters. We need not say it was our friend John Thorburn. Touching his hat in the most polite and deferential manner possible—

"Could you not, sir?" John began.

"No, sir, I could not, I cannot, I will not," shouted the now infuriated collector.

"I could not, I cannot, I will not," he roared out, without waiting for the conclusion of the sentence. "Leave me sir, begone, or I'll call the police, and have you taken into custody. This is a breach of the peace, sir; an assault, sir."

Having said this, the angry gentleman hurried away. Mr Thorburn saw that he had taken the matter far too seriously, to admit of anything being made of the interview, any purpose carried, or point pressed. There was a good time coming, however. What could not be accomplished to day, might be overtaken to-morrow; and, thus consoling himself, Mr Thorburn went away to call on an old acquaintance, a certain dealer in "British Spirits, Porter, and Ale," in Bell's Wynd, whom he had once surveved, and from whom he could calculate, with tolerable certainty, on receiving some little hospitalities—say, a slice of bread and cheese, and a glass or two of his favourite beverage, whisky and water. In this hope, it may gratify the reader to know, John was not disappointed.

Collector Wharton, the gentleman of whom we have of late spoken so much, lived, at the period to which our story refers, in a large self-contained house, which stood nearly at the head of Maxwell Street. This house, however, has long belonged to the things that were, having been swept away to make room for the range of buildings that now occupy that site. When it did exist, however, it exhibited a green painted door with a large massive brass knocker.

At this green door, and in the act of gently raising this brass knocker, appeared, just at the breakfast hour, on the morning following that on which occurred the little incidents above recorded, a certain personage in drab gaiters with metal buttons. Need we say it was John Thorburn? It was. Raising the knocker gently, and bringing it down with equal caution, John gave mild intimation that some one without desired communication with some one within.

The hint was taken. The door was opened by a servant girl. John, dreading a rebuff, or denial of admittance, instantly, on the door being opened, darted with great agility past the girl into the passage, and then, but not till then, asked if the collector was within. He was informed that he was. John said, he wished to see him for a moment. He was shewn into a small side-room, and the door closed upon him.

Having thus disposed of the visiter, the girl hastened to inform her master that a person desired to see him.

The collector looked aghast. A strong suspicion of who this person was, instantly crossed his mind. He hurried to the room in which his visiter had been deposited, with the desperate determination of one who desires to know the worst at once. He threw up the door. His worst fears were confirmed. John Thorburn stood before him.

"Beg pardon, sir," said John, before the horrified collector could say a word; "beg pardon, sir," he said, smiling winningly, and bowing with great deference, "but I have just taken the liberty"——

"Yes, sir, you have taken a liberty, and a most unwarrantable one," burst out the enraged collector, "in thus forcing your way into my house. What business have you here, sir? What right have you to intrude on my domestic privacy in this way? Have not I already told you that I can do nothing for you? Why, then, in the name of all that's annoying, will you thus continue to persecute me?"

"Sorry to displease you, sir—very sorry," replied Mr Thorburn, with great humility; "but I have just been thinking, sir, that if you could give me a bit certificate of good conduct and character while I was under you, when you were supervisor at Netherton, it might be of some service to me."

"Not the smallest, not the smallest. But, I'll tell you what, Mr Thorburn," said the collector, with a sudden calmness of manner, "if you will solemnly promise never to trouble me again, I *will* give you such a certificate as you ask for. Do you promise me?"

"I do, sir," said John.

The collector instantly sat down, and having drawn up the required attestation, handed it to Thorburn, who read it deliberately, folded it up carefully, and added it to the various other documents which he had already accumulated in the parchment-covered pocket-book. This done, he took up his hat and stick, wished the collector a respectful good morning, and walked out of the house. His point was gained.

At this period—that is, the period of which we are writing, and, indeed, until very lately, we had a Board of Excise of our own in Scotland; but, like many other and more important marks of our national independence, it has been swept away, and its power and patronage transferred to England—the Scottish Board, as our readers may know, was located at Edinburgh. It consisted of a certain number of commissioners—four or five, we believe—and a chairman. The control of this Board over their officers was absolute: they could make and unmake at pleasure, and with and in them alone rested all the hopes and fears of the Excise-man.

This Board met daily for the dispatch of business, which, of course, embraced petitions and memorials of all sorts; and as it did so, it naturally took cognizance, amongst others, of a certain document of the former description, which appeared, on a certain morning, about the period to which our story refers, on the table of the Board-room.

This document, which was taken up in its turn, by the secretary or clerk to the Board, to be read aloud for the edification of the assembled commissioners, told a piteous tale of privation and distress, in consequence of the petitioner having been discharged from their Honours' service, and this for a merely venial fault; involving no dishonesty, infidelity, or dereliction of duty of any kind. The said petition also set forth, that the petitioner had always been remarkable for sobriety, activity, and attention to the discharge of his duties; that he had, for several years, performed alone, without any assistance whatever, the laborious business of one of the wildest and heaviest charges in the Highlands; that, while there, he had toiled night and day, and often at the imminent risk of his life, in the discharge of the important duties confided to him by their Honours; and that he would cheerfully do so again, if he were restored to their Honours' favour, and to the situation from which he had been so unexpectedly dismissed.

"To take that gentleman's own account of the matter," here interposed a recently appointed commissioner, "he seems to be one of the most deserving, and one of the worst used men in the service." The remark was greeted by a smile from his more experienced colleagues.

"Why, my dear sir," said one of them, "by the time you have been a month at this Board, you will know better what value to put on such assertions as you have just now heard. All our petitioners—meaning all our discharged officers—are the most deserving and worst used men in the kingdom. I never knew one otherwise. Indeed, you will find, by and by, Mr Williams, that it is only the deserving we *do* discharge, leaving the worthless and dishonest to conduct the business of the revenue. An honest, steady man has no chance with us!"

The commissioner thus schooled, smiled and nodded a sign of comprehension. The secretary resumed the reading of the petition, which, however, we think it unnecessary to do, as, although of interminable length, it contained nothing of particular interest. The commissioners yawned; the secretary became husky in his reading; for it was by far the longest petition that that gentleman had ever had the happiness of reading. But everything has an end, and so, notwithstanding of its length, had the petition in question. The jaded secretary at last wound up, with an air of satisfaction which he could not conceal, with—"And your petitioner shall ever pray.—John Thorburn."

There was a murmur and movement amongst the commissioners, as of men who have been just relieved from a painful and fatiguing stretch of attention. Some took long pinches of snuff, and some stretched out their arms and legs in the luxurious indulgence of a delicious relief from an irksome oppression of the faculties, physical and moral. The secretary sat down exhausted, and eyed askance the petition he had just read with a look of horror.

It was some time after the conclusion of the reading of the formidable document just alluded to, before any one spoke. At length—

"That *is* a long story," said one of the commissioners; "a few more of these, and we must drop all other business."

"I've met with nothing so long-winded since I read Clarissa Harlowe," remarked another. "It is a most appalling document."

After a few more remarks of a similar kind, the case was referred for inquiry, and other business proceeded to. This business concluded, the Board broke up for the day; and the commissioners, including the chairman, left the Board-room, and repaired to their several homes. The latter had just left the office; he was alone; and was thinking, as he went along, of the interminable petition to which he had been doomed that day to listen, when he found his progress suddenly interrupted by a person in drab gaiters, who, hat in hand, begged his pardon for the liberty he took in thus addressing him on the street, and announced himself as John Thorburn, late officer of Excise, in the island of ——, in the West Highlands.

The chairman gave a slight shudder of horror at the name, but merely said—

"Well, sir?"

Mr Thorburn plunged his hand into his side-pocket, drew out his parchment-covered pocket-book, untied the bit of red tape by which it was secured, and took out a letter, which he presented, with great humility of manner, to the chairman. The letter was addressed to that gentle man; and was from a friend of his, to whom Thorburn—unfortunately for him—had, somehow or other, got access, and from whom he had contrived to get the letter in question, recommending his case to the consideration of the personage to whom it was now delivered. On reading the letter, the chairman thrust it into his pocket, saying—

"I'm really sorry, Mr Thorburn, I can do nothing for you individually. Your case is before the Board, and will be decided on according to its merits. You may, however, depend on having strict justice. If you have been wronged, you shall be righted. You shall have a fair hearing, as you have already had a *patient* one; I can assure you of *that*. More than this I can neither say nor do in the case, in the meantime."

And the annoyed chairman was making off as fast as he could, when Mr Thorburn again planted himself before him, and, in the most humble tone, implored just a moment's further hearing. The chairman impatiently placed himself in an attitude to listen, when his tormentor immediately began to edify him with a second edition of his case—enlarged and improved. This was more than human fortitude could stand, under any circumstances; and, consequently, much more than Mr Thorburn's present victim could bear with. He accordingly instantly interrupted the narrator with—

"Well, sir—well, sir, I know all that already. No occasion whatever to repeat it. It's all in your petition. I beg you will allow me to pass, sir," waving him aside with his hand. "I insist upon being no further interrupted."

And the irritated chairman forced his way onwards, and, finally, succeeded in getting clear, for the time at any rate, of his relentless persecutor.

In less than two hours after the chairman's door bell was loudly rung. It was the letter-carrier. A letter for the chairman. It was put into that gentleman's hand. He opened it. It was a long letter. He looked for the signature. He found it. It was John Thorburn. The chairman flung himself back in his seat, and held the open letter at the full extent of his arm. It was too much—too, too much. He did not know what to think, or to do, or to say.

At length however, he rose from his seat, walked deli-

berately towards the fire, with the open letter still in his hand, and thrust it into the heart of the glowing embers. Pity, however, he did this without reading it. If he had read it, he would have found that it contained a long apology for the liberty the writer had taken in interrupting him on the street, and concluded with a humble request that the chairman would be pleased to take his case into his benevolent consideration, and that his petitioner would ever pray, &c.

Whatever satisfaction the persecuted chairman might find in the decided step which he had just taken—namely, in committing John's letter to the flames—he could not but feel, at the same time, that it was a vain proceeding, and could in no way tend to protect him from any future attacks which the enemy might meditate. John could write letters nearly as fast as he could burn them; and, it is certain, that although he knew of nineteen having positively been submitted to the process of incremation, he would, without the least hesitation or grumbling, immediately set about penning the twentieth. So, from merely burning his letters, there was no hope.

The chairman of the Board of Excise, however, had, in the present case, hopes of relief from his tormentor, which rendered him, perhaps, less sensitive to John's annoyances than he otherwise would have been. He was on the eve of a trip to the Highlands, where he expected to spend a few happy weeks, free from the cares of office, and far out of the reach of the persecutions of John Thorburn.

In this projected jaunt of the chairman's, we feel so interested, that, with the reader's permission, we will take the liberty of accompanying him, and leave our friend, Mr Thorburn, for a time to pursue those operations, in which we have just seen him so actively engaged.

It was on a fine summer morning, then, soon after the occurrence of the circumstance just related, that the chairman and his daughter—a pretty young lady of seventeen or thereabouts, and an only child—took their seats in a post-chaise, which stood at their door. Having taken their seats, the said chaise immediately drove off, and was soon whirling them along the road to Stirling, to which they were, in the first place, bound, and where they arrived safely on the afternoon of the same day.

From Stirling, where they spent an entire day, the chairman and his daughter next proceeded to Callender, and, thereafter, went roving through the Highlands (no necessity for us following every turn they took) for a fortnight, or so, enjoying the mountain breezes of the north, and feasting on the gorgeous scenery of the land of the Gael.

The chairman was a happy man. He felt a buoyancy of spirit and a freedom from care which he had not felt for many a day, and maliciously laughed in his sleeve as he thought how his colleagues would be harassed by John Thorburn, while he (it was a selfish idea) was far out of his reach, and safe from his persecutions.

These were, as we have said, selfish reflections. They were, however, natural enough. But, to return to our story:—The expiry of the particular fortnight above alluded to, found the chairman of the Board of Excise, and his pretty daughter, journeying towards Abernethan, on their way homewards. They intended putting up at the inn, at the place just named, for the night, and proceeding next day to Stirling

It was now dark, however, and they were yet several miles distant from their proposed halting-place. The night, too, was misty; so much so, that their driver hardly knew where he was; and, worse still, there was a ford to cross before they reached Abernethan.

On ordinary occasions, there was nothing in the latter circumstance in the least alarming, for the ford was usually very shallow—not many inches in depth; but there were times when it was more formidable—after long continued rains. Then, it was positively dangerous, especially to those who were not intimately acquainted with the passage: all the difference arising from keeping a little up or down the ford. By observing the former course, it was safe at all times; but, taking the latter route, when the river was swollen, it was perilous; for there was deep water below.

Now, at the time our travellers approached the ford in question, it was precisely in this ticklish state; and the night being pitch dark, and the driver but indifferently acquainted with his ground, or rather, his water, he, as such chances are always in favour of the worst, unhesitatingly entered the ford at the wrong point.

Before he had proceeded many yards, the water was up to the nave of the wheels, and the horses beginning to loose their footing. The driver became alarmed, and so also did his passengers, who became aware of their danger. The young lady screamed violently; and her father, though less noisy, was not less uneasy.

Having a general idea, however, that the ford was safe enough, the driver was persevering in his route; and in less than a minute more, the carriage would have been floating down the stream, had not Jehu's attention, and progress too, been arrested by a loud cry from the bank, calling on him for God's sake to hold, and not to proceed a step further, otherwise every one of them would be inevitably drowned.

Not content with giving this friendly warning, the person on the bank immediately after dashed into the stream, to lend what assistance he could in having the horses turned; and in this service he was so active and efficient, that he soon had the satisfaction of leading the chaise high and dry on *terra firma* on the side from which it had started. But the stranger's kind interference in behalf of the travellers did not end here: still leading the horses by the head, he conducted them to the proper ford, led them right through the stream, and did not buit his hold till he landed the chaise safely on the opposite side.

It was now time for the occupants of the carriage to thank their deliverer for all he had done for them; and this they did not neglect to do. Thrusting their heads out of the chaise window, both father and daughter were earnest and eloquent in the expressions of their gratitude.

The former, however, desirous of doing something more than merely speaking his feelings, stated, that they intended putting up that night at the inn at Abernethan, and that if their deliverer would do him the favour to call upon them there, either that night or the following morning, he should be most happy of it.

The stranger said he would do so with much pleasure, and it would be with no inconvenience to himself, as he intended being in Abernethan at any rate early next day.

This arrangement made, the parties separated. The chaise drove on, and in due time reached the inn at Abernethan.

On the following morning, the chairman and his daughter waited impatiently for the appearance of their deliverer, more particularly the latter, who, being of a susceptible and somewhat romantic turn of mind, now viewed the affair of the previous night as quite an adventure, and hoped that their deliverer, whose features and appearance she had not been able to make out in the dark, would turn out to be a handsome and accomplished cavalier, like some of those she had read of in novels and romances.

On this subject the young lady's imagination had been busy at work, and had so successfully laboured in the task of distorting and exaggerating facts, that she sat perfectly prepared to see some tall, handsome fellow enter the apartment, and claim the honour of being her deliverer.

Her father did not know in what shape this interesting personage would present himself, nor did he much care:

To him, his personal appearance was of little moment; and, of course, did not cost him a thought. He would be glad to see him, whatever might be the shape he assumed.

By, and by, and just as the chairman and his fair daughter had finished breakfast, a gentle tap was heard at the door; and the young lady's heart beat pit a pat. Her papa called out, "come in." The door opened. The red face of an elderly personage was thrust in; then followed the personage himself, and a figure in a rusty black coat, dirty white neckcloth, short, shabby unmentionables, and drab gaiters, stood before the astonished chairman, and his disappointed and mortified daughter. It was John Thorburn!

"Mr Thorburn!" exclaimed the chairman, in utter amazement. It was all he could say.

John becked, and bowed, and smiled in reply, and then added, after giving the chairman to understand that he was the fortunate person who had had the happiness of aiding them in their distress, that he hoped his honour and the young lady were none the worse for the adventure of the preceding night.

The chairman assured him that they were not, and then proceeded to ask by what sort of chance it happened that he, Mr Thorburn, of all the persons on earth, should have been the man to come to their assistance in such time and place.

John explained the matter simply enough, by stating, what was the fact, that he was a native of that part of the country, and that he had come to reside with his friends for a few days, with the view of getting some of the neighbouring gentleman to interest themselves in his behalf in effecting his restoration; and John immediately produced, from the crown of his hat, a couple of letters which he had obtained from two of the persons alluded to, and with which, and a few more he expected yet to get, he meant, he said, to proceed to Edinburgh in the course of two or three days.

Need we add, that John did not allow the present happy and most unlooked-for opportunity to pass unimproved: need we say, that he quickly involved the chairman in all the windings and turnings of his now interminable case, and that he pressed him hard on the subject of his restoration. This we need hardly say he did. But it is necessary to say, that on *that* subject the chairman, though gratefully owning his obligations to John, still fought shy. He would not, and could not promise his restoration; but he did say, that he would certainly do what he could for him; and having said this, he thrust a handsome sum of money into John's hand, and bowed him out of the apartment.

Here we shift the scene again to the Excise Board room, and advance the period to about three weeks beyond the time at which the incidents just related occurred—a space during which, we think, we will shew that Mr Thorburn was by no means an idle man. The commissioners are seated around the Board table, and the clerk, or secretary, has just taken up a handful of closely-written sheets of folio paper.

"What's that?" exclaimed one of the gentlemen, in a tone of alarm, and eyeing the formidable document, or rather mass of documents, with a look of nervous excitement, in which, to judge by their countenances, all his colleagues partook.

"A petition, sir," replied the clerk.

"From whom—the name?" said the commissioner, with increased alarm.

The clerk hastily turned over the voluminous manuscript which he held in his hand, and, after glancing for an instant at the bottom of the last page, announced that the petitioner was John Thorburn. The commissioners, each and all of them, simultaneously threw themselves back in their chairs, with an expression of dismay in their countenances, accompanied by a murmur of horror.

"Good heavens! that man Thorburn again," at length exclaimed one of the martyrs. "This is the fourth petition we have had from him within these three weeks; and every one of them an hour's reading in length. But this is not all, gentlemen," continued the commissioner who was now speaking, and turning to his colleagues as he spoke—"I have now to inform you, for I can bear it no longer, that I am persecuted with that man wherever I go. Never was so tormented by any human being in my life. He waylays me on the street; he calls at my house; he write me by every post; he accosts me wherever he meets me; he pursues me; he crosses my path in every direction. In short, I have no life with him."

"Very odd, very alarming this," said another. "I am precisely in the same predicament. For the last three weeks I have been persecuted off the face of the earth by this man. I have had at least a dozen letters from him, twice as many calls, and three times as many interruptions from him on the public streets; besides applications without number from persons whom he has interested in his behalf—heaven knows how or by what means. It is not yet an hour since, that I met a friend as I came along towards the Excise Office—

"'Good morning, Mr Commissioner,' said this person.

"'Hope you're well, my good sir,' I replied.

"'By the by,' said my friend, taking me by a button, and leading me a little aside, 'I have a favour to ask of you. There is an unfortunate Exciseman in whom I have been induced to take an interest. He has been, I understand, discharged from the service, and is just now in a state of great destitution. Now, the favour I have to ask of you, my dear sir, is, that you would give this poor man's case the most favourable consideration you can.'

"'His name,' I inquired.

"'John Thorburn,' replied my friend."

A simultaneous burst of laughter from the other commissioners—for whose gravity this dramatic sketch of his persecutor, by their humorous colleague, was too much—announced that Thorburn's case had assumed so much of the ludicrous as to render it impossible to view it any longer seriously. Moreover, on a comparison of notes, it appeared that every member of the Board, without one exception, had experienced precisely the same treatment at the hands of their indefatigable petitioner. In this matter, he had been equally impartial as industrious, having so regulated and systematized his annoyance, that each daily received a share in the shape of either a call, a card, or an interruption. To all this, the chairman now added the history of the chaise adventure, and concluded by asking his colleagues what was to be done.

"He is below at this moment," continued the chairman. "I saw him hovering about the door as I came into the office. What, on earth, shall we do with him?"

"Appoint him—in heaven's name restore him!" said one of the commissioners. "I see no other way of dealing with the case."

"Yes, yes, for God's sake restore him!" said another. The sentiment was unanimous. A minute was forthwith made of the decision; and John Thorburn, in less than eight days thereafter, was doing duty in Glasgow collection.

WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

MARY MIDDLETON; A TALE OF THE DEAR YEARS.

It has been said by a noble poet, that

> "Men remember battles, fires, and wrecks,
> Or any other thing that brings regret,
> Or breaks their hopes, or hearts, or heads, or necks."

If this assertion be true, (though its author, perhaps, cared little about the truth of it,) we cannot but believe that the "dear years," which occurred at the end of the last, and the beginning of the present century, must be fresh in the recollection of many a poor man and woman, whose hopes, and hearts too, were so sadly broken by the scarcity and enormous price of provisions which was then so severely felt over the whole extent of our island. The cause of this scarcity was, in the first place, a rainy season, which produced a late and deficient harvest; and the evil was prolonged on the subsequent year, by an intense and protracted drought. Oat-meal, which was then the principal article of food among the peasantry of Scotland, sold at the unprecedented price of three shillings and sixpence per peck. Work was also scarce; and the wages of those who procured it were extremely low. During this period of dearth and dull trade, the privations which were endured by many of the labouring classes were so extreme, that even the most moderate account of them would seem entirely improbable in the eyes of the rich. Nor can the poor themselves, who were brought into existence after that period was past, form any adequate idea of the sufferings of their fathers while it continued. These dear years, like every other great emergency, tested the minds of men and women, and brought many qualities to light, which never would have been known had it not been for the severe distress which called them into exercise.

Among these, we are proud to say, generosity, independence, and honesty, appeared conspicuous. It is to be regretted, however, that some feelings of a less honourable kind did occasionally exhibit themselves; but these were few; and though we may, at some future period, present our readers with a specimen or two, we prefer beginning with those examples which are most admirable and most worthy of imitation.

Robert Middleton, the father of our heroine, was a poor but honest and industrious labouring man. His mind was naturally of the most benevolent order; and, in early life, he had entertained those romantic notions of generosity which are common to every ardent spirit in the first stage of existence; but which, though admired by all, meet with so little encouragement from the men of the world, that they frequently seem only the antecedents of sternness and misanthrophy in maturer years. It was thus with Robert Middleton. The coldness of mankind had taught him to conceal his natural benevolence, and to affect an indifference of manner which accorded ill with the affectionate warmth —we had almost said the affectionate weakness—of his heart. This sternness of character became habitual in his intercourse with the external world. It was only in his own family that his real qualities were to be seen without disguise; and even there, before strangers, he seemed a severe father and a harsh husband; but his kindness returned when they were gone. He had often been cheated by impostors, and laughed at for allowing himself to be deceived; but, when a case of real distress came before him, he forgot his past resolutions and present necessities, and administered relief with all that delicacy and liberality which his generous sympathies prompted him to exercise.

At the period when our story begins, Robert Middleton was pretty well advanced in life. He was poor; but his poverty was neither occasioned by profusion nor idleness. His food had ever been the cheapest that would support life and labour; his dress, though clean and whole, had ever been the coarsest that was worn by his class: and the day was stormy indeed if it deterred him from engaging in his laborious occupation. It was the unacknowledged and unsuspecting benevolence of his character, which exhausted the little overplus of his hard-earned income.

Such was the condition of Robert Middleton at the commencement of the "dear years;" and his circumstances were rendered still more distressing by the death of his wife, which occurred only a few days before the term of Martinmas; at which time he was obliged to remove from the cottage which he had occupied for many years, and take up his residence among strangers, where his sober character and concealed good qualities were but little known. His family consisted of one son, George, who followed his own occupation; and one daughter, Mary, now "to woman grown," who had been at service some years with the minister of a neighbouring parish. Her place was a comfortable one; but she could not bear the idea of her father being left, in his old age, to suffer all the hardships of his condition, without a woman's care. She, accordingly, resigned her situation, and returned to his cottage; and the events which afterwards occurred, convinced her of the propriety of her conduct.

Old Robert made application for employment at every place where he thought it was to be procured; but the deficient harvest deterred the farmers from making any improvements; and many of them were discharging their old hands, while few were engaging new ones. Robert, moreover, was now in a place where his capabilities as a labourer were little known; and all his attempts to obtain work, ended only in disappointment. He had been accustomed to active exertion; and the want of employment was of itself a painful privation. His life depended upon the results of his labour; and the prospect of approaching want, added double poignancy to his grief. He had lately been deprived of a faithful and long-loved wife, whose sympathy had often cheered him in his past sorrows, and whose ingenuity had often extricated him from his greatest difficulties. It cannot, therefore, be a subject of wonder, that his vigorous mind was dejected, and his healthy constitution impaired by these combined causes of anguish. He wandered about, for a few days, in sickly despondency; but actual disease soon followed this symptomatic languor, and he at last found himself unable to leave his bed. His son, George, who was also idle, still continued to search for employment; but, night after night, he returned with the melancholy intelligence that none was to be found.

Such was the condition of father and son, when Mary—who, at the request of her mistress, had continued in her

place for some time after the term—arrived at their cottage. Her heart sunk within her when she entered it, and beheld its desolate appearance. Her brother was sitting before the empty fireplace, with his head leaning upon his hand, musing in sullen silence upon his gloomy prospects. The hearth was covered with ashes; and the floor, and even the furniture, had begun to accumulate wreaths of dust. Nothing was as it should have been; and Mary could not help weeping as she thought on her mother, whose hand was so sadly missed in the confusion which now lay around her. A little more observation touched her heart still more painfully; and tears shed over the memory of the dead, were soon followed by tears for the sufferings of the living. A deep groan from one of the beds attracted her attention, and she ran towards it in a state of mind which may not be described.

"How are you, faither—what is the matter with you?" she inquired hurriedly, as she bent down over him with a look in which love, grief, and fear, struggled for superiority.

"I'm no that very braw, lassie," said the old man, raising himself upon his arm; "but, oh, Mary, woman, I'm baith glad and grieved to see ye here. It's a puir hame ye'r come to, lassie; and little did I ance think that ye'r faither's hoose wud ever gie ye sic a cauld reception; but there's naither heat nor meat within the door, Mary; and it micht weel break my heart to think that ye hae left peace and plenty in ye'r maister's hoose, and come to perish o' want in mine. Naither Geordie nor me hae had a turn o' wark since Martinmas; and noo, I'm no able to wurk, though half the warld war seekin me. But it's the wull o' Providence that it's sae, Mary, and I'm ower bauld to compleen."

"Dinna distress yoursel about me, faither," sobbed out the affectionate girl. "I would be happy if I saw you weel again; and I will be happier here, sharing your sufferings and endeavouring to promote your comfort, than I could be anywhere else, though possessing plenty, while you were pining for want of food and attention at home. But see," she continued, exhibiting her wages, "here is something that, wi' the blessing of God, may contribute to your recovery. Run George," she added, turning to her brother, and presenting him with a part of the money—"run to the village, and get coals and meal wi' this; for I believe both my faither and you are perishin o' want."

The young man hurried off immediately, and

> "Hope, for ae bright moment, darted
> Through the gloom of black despair."

He had reason to believe that his father's sickness was occasioned by anxiety and want; and the joyous expectation that, by removing the cause the malady would also be removed, gave a buoyancy to his spirits which he had not felt since his mother died; and he soon returned with his errand—a very small quantity of very bad meal in one bag, and as many coals in another as would be sufficient to cook the unwholesome morsel. In the meantime, Mary had collected a few sticks, and kindled a fire; she had also swept the hearth, and arranged the furniture in such a manner that her brother was quite surprised with the change of appearance which the cottage presented at his return; and even old Robert, as he cast his eye, with a glance of melancholy satisfaction, around it, remarked, that "ilka thing was just like what it was wont to be when her mither lived."

However deserving of notice, it would be tiresome to enumerate all the painful sacrifices which were made, and all the ingenious expedients which were resorted to, by this affectionate girl, for supporting the spirits, and supplying the wants, of her two remaining relatives, who, but for her exertions, must have perished in honourable want, or subsisted by dishonourable means. Though she would have, perhaps, sunk down, appalled and powerless, before difficulties and dangers which the bolder spirit of her brother would have encountered and overcome, yet she endured privations, and bore up under circumstances amidst which he—unsupported by her counsel and example—would have fretted himself into madness, or pined away in despair. But, with all her exertions and all her economy, the little sum which she had saved from her last year's wages was fast diminishing. Her father was still confined to bed, and her brother was still unemployed; and though she had been busy with her needle and sheers, making and mending some dresses which her late mistress had given her when she left her service, the small remuneration anticipated for such labour would do little to the support of three individuals, if no other source of income could be obtained.

Amid these gloomy prospects, the old year passed away and the new one commenced, without any of those humble demonstrations of gladness which used to be common in every cottage at that particular season. The cogful of fat brose which, time out of mind, had formed the Hansel Monday's feast in every respectable family, was this year entirely awanting. No little party of neighbouring lads and lasses assembled around the cottage fire, to sup, and laugh, and make love, as they were wont. The Middletons, it is true, were now removed from the smiles of those familiar faces which they used to meet upon such occasions; and the death of their mother had also left them with a subject of sorrow peculiar to themselves; but they were not peculiar in their privations. The same scarcity of employment and dearth of provisions which affected them, was felt, in a greater or less degree, by every individual of their class. Some, however, possessed friends to whom they could apply for assistance; others possessed that obduracy of heart which shrinks not from the disgrace of beggary; and others were so destitute of morality, that they suffered no privations which theft or robbery could supply. But there were many who, like the Middletons, had no friends—who could neither beg nor steal—who would have perished of want rather than stretched out their hands to take what was not honestly their own; and, we have reason to believe, that numbers of these noble-minded individuals—these unknown ornaments of humanity—actually died of starvation; though those who would have admired their principles and alleviated their sufferings, knew nothing of the cause of their death.

Early in the month of January, the Middletons were again destitute of food and fire. The roads, too, were blocked up with snow; and Mary found that it would be impossible to accomplish her intended journey to the manse of N——, with the articles of dress which she had been making and mending for her late mistress. She had no prospect of relief save from this quarter, and her hopes sunk with her resources. Her father and brother, however were, as yet, ignorant of their real condition. From a desire not to distress them, she had concealed it till longer concealment was impossible; and, calling her brother to the door, she informed him that her money was all expended, and that their stock of provisions was nearly exhausted. This was done, not with the expectation that he could do anything to procure a fresh supply, but for the purpose of preparing him for sufferings still more severe than he had yet endured. She watched his countenance as she communicated the painful intelligence, and she beheld his brow grow darker as she spoke. He possessed a heart which could not be daunted by danger; but it shrank, appalled, from the very idea of want; and the timid girl, who had been accustomed to look up to him as her protector—who would have rushed to his side at an owlet's scream, and deemed herself safe in his presence—now nobly endeavoured to establish his wavering fortitude; and, "with a mild and patient spirit held aloof their fate." She pointed out to him the possi

bility of relief from various sources; yet she was now "inspiring hopes herself had ceased to feel."

"But should these sources fail," said she, "still we must not despair. The very ravens carried food to the prophet; and he who directed them is still omnipotent; and none who put their trust in him, as the minister says, shall ever be disappointed."

George's mind was too deeply engaged with its own troubled thoughts for giving much attention to his sister's remarks. His eyes kept wandering wildly around, as if he meditated upon the possibility of breaking through the snowy barrier which lay piled along the cottage wall in many a curious wreath. Indeed he seemed altogether unconscious of his sister's presence till she took him affectionately by the hand and begged him to come into the cottage. He followed her without uttering a word. She pointed him to a chair, and presented him with a book, which she had received from the minister, requesting him to divert himself with it till the pot boiled. While he was apparently perusing it, she was employed in preparing a morsel which was to serve for breakfast, dinner, and supper—their stock of provisions being too small to admit of more than one meal a-day. It consisted of porridge, as usual, which Mary divided between her father and brother, reserving only a very small portion for herself. George had been in an unusually discontented mood through the whole of the day, and his irritability seemed to increase as night approached. He soon threw aside the book, and, drawing his platter towards him, he took a few hurried mouthfuls of the porridge, then pushing it violently across the table to his sister, said—"Sup that, Mary;" and, rising at the same time, he began to pace through the floor with rapid and agitated looks.

George had shewn the greatest patience and docility in all his previous privations, and this new phase of his character alarmed his poor sister exceedingly. She even began to suspect that his sanity was in some degree injured by the circumstances in which he was involved, and she exerted all her powers of soothing, for the purpose of restoring his wonted placidity; but the awkward answers which he gave, and the broken sentences which he occasionally uttered, soon convinced her that he had more to trouble him than she was yet acquainted with.

"Necessity has no law!" he muttered unconsciously, as he strode through the cottage in gloomy abstraction. "The devils will laugh at me for returning," he continued; "but it must be so."

"What is the matter wi' ye, George? and who will laugh at you?" said Mary, advancing to meet him, and looking anxiously into his face.

"Who will laugh at me?" said her brother, starting back, and glaring wildly upon her—"Who will laugh at me?—what do you mean, Mary?"

"I scarcely know what I mean, or what I say, George," said his sister, confusedly; "but I see you are troubled about something."

"Troubled! eh? and so I am troubled. Are you not troubled? Have we not cause to be troubled?" said her brother.

"I dinna deny that, George," said Mary; "but patience may sometimes overcome pain. Let us not add to unavoidable sufferings, by the bitterness of discontented spirits. Only look to my father, George—see how resignedly he"——

"Peace, peace, Mary!" said her brother, sternly. "I will listen to your sermon patiently when I come back; but patience will neither bring a pound of bread to the house, nor put me in a way to purchase one." He turned, and was proceeding towards the door, when Mary seized him by the hand, and cried—

"Stop, George!—for Godsake, stop and tell me where you are going, and wherefore you are leaving me!"

"To the Blue Barrel inn to meet a friend!" was the laconic reply.

"And who is your friend, George?" said Mary, bursting into tears. "What can I hae done to offend ye that ye are afraid to trust me wi' the name of your friend and the purpose of your meeting."

"Be calm, Mary," said her brother, regarding her with a look of pity. "I am not offended; but there are some things that the best of women cannot be trusted with. My friend's name, however, is M'Donald."

"M'Donald!" said Mary, with a blush which shewed that she knew more of the individual than her brother was aware of. "Jamie M'Donald is a decent lad for aught that I know; but your business wi' him cannot be so important but that ye may wait till the snow melts."

"When the snow melts," said her brother, "I may have no business with him. This night, this hour it must be done, or never." He opened the door and went forth. Mary was now fully convinced of his madness; and she rushed out after him, in a state of mind which cannot be described.

"George, George!" she exclaimed, grasping him again by the hand, with a look of agony which penetrated his very soul, and for a moment seemed to shake its firmest resolutions. "George, George! are you really distracted, or do you want to drive me to distraction? Look at that threatening sky, look at these mountains of snow, and think upon the madness of going out in such a night. O! George, do not leave me; and I will fast for you, work for you, beg for you, or die for you!"

The stern determination of the man seemed to struggle for a while with the gentler affections of the brother, but the first prevailed.

"I am neither distracted," said he, "nor do I want to drive you to distraction, but both your life and my father's depend upon the success of this night's exertion, and I must not be diverted from my purpose by the false fears of a silly lassie. If I cannot provide for you, Mary, you shall neither work, nor want, nor beg for me. But go to the house now, and attend to my father." He disengaged himself from her grasp, and dashed off through the snow at his utmost speed. Mary endeavoured to follow him; but her strength had been more exhausted by anxiety and want than she was herself aware of; and, though her excited spirits inspired her nerves with a temporary energy, she soon stuck fast in a wreath of snow, which her brother had just struggled over. After many unavailing efforts to proceed, she felt the necessity of turning again to the cottage; and the agitation of her mind was so great, that she accomplished her purpose with difficulty. Her imagination still followed her rash and uncontrollable brother. His parting words still rung in her ears; and his probable fate assumed the appearance of a fearful reality in her eyes. And then death among the snow was not the worst of the evil in Mary's estimation. Her mind, which was naturally melancholy, had been early and deeply impressed with religious feelings; and poor George was in no state to die. She took down the Bible and tried to read; but her soul was too agitated to draw solace from that holiest source of consolation. She knelt down and endeavoured to deprecate heaven in his behalf, but

> "Her breath came gaspingly and thick;
> And her crushed heart fell blind and sick;
> And she could neither sigh nor pray."

She was aroused from this trance of grief by her father's voice calling for water; and, when she rose to comply with his request, her feeble limbs would scarcely carry her to his bedside. But the darkness of the cottage prevented him from observing her forlorn condition; and he only remarked, as he returned the empty tankard—

"I'm feared, Mary, that want an' watching 'll be the

death o' ye a'thegither. Ye maun gang to yer bed, an try to get some sleep noo; for it's wearin late, I'm thinkin."

Mary tottered silently back to her seat, where she passed the night in sleepless, hopeless, unmitigated misery. When the morning dawned, she went forth to gaze in the direction of the village to which her brother said he was going; but it was not with the expectation of seeing him return. The same feeling which induces the living to look upon the graves of their deceased relatives, induced Mary to look over the fields where she believed her beloved brother was lying lifeless among the snow. She saw

——— "The vapours, round the mountains curled,
Melt into morn, and light awake the world;"

but she saw no appearance of him, the glance of whose eye was dearer to her than the brightest beams of the morning. Faint and shivering, she again returned to the cottage; but she found no comfort there.

"The darkness of that dim abode
Fell on her like a heavy load."

Intense grief, operating upon some of the vital organs, made her feel such an agonizing sense of suffocation, that she was again obliged to hurry to the door, gasping for breath; but, even in that moment of severe suffering, her eyes turned eagerly to the village, whose scattered cottages and little inn had now become dimly visible; and, to her inexpressible joy, she beheld a dark form among the snow moving rapidly towards her. It was George. The fallen Peri, when she found the gift which unlocked the gates of Paradise, sung not more merrily—

"Joy, joy, forever! my task is done!
The gate is passed, and heaven is won!"

than Mary repeated these words—"My brother was lost, and is found—was dead, and is alive again!" and her heart, which could not beg heaven for mercy in the bitterness of its grief, now poured forth a torrent of thanks from the abundance of its gratitude.

When George returned, he was in better humour than when he went away; but he still refused to satisfy his sister as to the object of his adventure. He shewed some contrition, however, for the ungentle treatment which he had given her on the preceding evening, and some commiseration of the sufferings which she had endured on his account. He knew that she had scarcely tasted food for several days; and he now insisted that she should prepare something for herself—assuring her, at the same time, that he expected a friend with some meal in the evening.

"Is it Jamie M'Donald ye expect, George?" said his sister, blushing at her own question.

On being informed that it was, she smiled, and looked satisfied, and ventured to take some breakfast. As the day advanced, Mary began to pay a little more attention to her own personal appearance than she had done for some time past. The old, cracked, window-pane which had been prepared, with paste and paper, to serve the purpose of a mirror, was now turned out from the corner of a shelf, where it had long lain in inglorious rest; and, by its aid, Mary discovered the fearful ravages which want and wo had lately made upon her own beautiful features. George, who could not help wondering at these unusual operations, watched his sister closely at her humble toilet; and he beheld her colour change, and a single tear steal slowly down her cheek, as she gazed into the dirty piece of glass. Her once healthy and highly transparent complexion was now sickly, shrunk, and hollow; her once full and finely-formed lips were now thin and pale; and her once elegantly-curled and glossy jet-black locks—locks which had been the envy of every village lass—were now dry and lustreless. These ruined charms were soon repaired, as far as her simple art could repair them; but a complete restoration was only to be effected by time and better fortune.

Evening came, and with it came James M'Donald. He entered the cottage, as was the custom of his class, without ceremony; and, throwing down a pretty large quantity of meal upon the table, he introduced himself by saying—

"Ye may a' sell yer legs when ye like, neebors, for this is nae warld for creatures wantin wings noo. I've been warstlin by the way this twa hours, I'm sure; an', had I no fand an open door here, I micht hae nestled amang the snaw the nicht."

"Hoo are ye, Jamie?" said Mary, springing forward to meet him, and familiarly offering him her hand.

The cottage was but dimly lighted; and the stranger gazed confusedly upon her, but neither took her hand nor answered her question. Mary shrunk back with an involuntary start; and, colouring deeply at her own mistaken civility, she folded her arms upon her breast, and turned timidly to her brother.

"Can it be you, Mary; or is my een in the mirligoes?" said the young man, at length, advancing and seizing her by the hand. "Preserve's a', woman! but ye're desperate white growin; ye're no like yersel ava noo, lassie!—what are ye doin here? an' what for did ye leave the minister?—I thocht ye had jiltit me a'thegither, ye wild hempy; but a seeker has aye a guid scent, ye see, an' fortune sometimes gars the ba' row the richt gait, too. But, dear me, woman, ye're dreedfu altered sin I saw ye last. Geordie Girdleton wadna ken ye nae mair than I did noo. I doot ye've been missin the flesh pats o' Egypt sin the dearth began!"

We can only say that Mary gave appropriate answers to this confused multitude of questions and remarks. But in order to account for M'Donald's ignorance of her connections and place of residence, it will be necessary to give a brief history of the origin of their acquaintance, and the circumstances in which they last parted.

James M'Donald, then, was a ploughman; and he had lived several years with a farmer, in a remote part of the parish of N———. He had thus an opportunity of seeing Mary once a-week at the kirk, and he also made opportunities for visiting her sometimes at the manse. We cannot say that either him or Mary were in love, for they never said so to any one; but Margaret Dibble, the sexton's wife, always asserted that they met oftener then they had business to do.

A short time before the term, James M'Donald called at the manse to inform Mary that he was leaving his place, and that he was not engaged to another. He promised, however, that he would come back and "speir for her," as soon as he was settled, though his situation should be twenty miles distant from hers. At this time Mary's parents were both in good health, and she had no intention of leaving the manse. The death of her mother changed her resolution. M'Donald was engaged, a few days after the term, to Mr Markham, a pretty extensive farmer, who lived in the neighbourhood of Robert Middleton's new residence. George and James had been "neebor herds" in early life, and when they met their intimacy was again renewed; but M'Donald knew nothing of the consanguinity which existed between his friend and Mary; nor had he heard anything of the death of her mother, or of her removal from the manse, till a few nights before, when, according to promise, he had called there and found her not. The young woman who succeeded her, only knew that she was gone, but she could not tell whither. These circumstances, taken in connection with Mary's altered appearance, sufficiently account for the young man's embarrassment when he met her in the dim twilight of her father's cottage.

George, highly pleased to discover that his young friend was an acknowledged acquaintance with his sister, lost all his sullenness and discontent, and again appeared in his originally good-natured and humorous countenance. And even old Robert leaned forward in his bed and listened to,

and laughed soberly at, the jests of the youngsters. But occasionally, in the true capacity of a father and instructor, he qualified their hasty remarks with some serious observation of his own; "and mingled a' wi' admonition due."

In this company Mary spent one happy evening; and after his departure, she continued to look as if her better days were come again. George, however, did not seem equally tranquil; his manner was thoughtful and abstracted, and his eyes frequently displayed a troubled wildness of expression, for which his sister, who watched him narrowly, could conjecture no cause. He often sprang up abruptly, and paced through the floor in great agitation, then stopped short in the middle of a movement, as if some uncommon sound had struck upon his ear, then started off to the door and listened attentively to the howling of the tempest, without the least apparent motive for doing so.

At this period of our national history, family worship, which is now too much neglected, was regularly observed in almost every cottage; and when the accustomed hour arrived, old Robert Middleton called upon his son to read a portion of the Bible preparatory to the prayer which he, though confined to bed, was about to offer up. George took down the book; but his hand trembled and his voice faltered so much, that he was obliged to resign his part to his sister; and Mary could not help thinking, that he had either committed or meditated the commission of some sinful deed, and that the very sight of the Word of God stung his heart with fearful forebodings of future punishment. When the prayer was ended, both went to their beds, but not to sleep. The one was too agitated, and the other too anxious to rest.

In about an hour after this, as Mary lay thinking of her brother, and listening to the howling of the wind and the rattling of the rain without, she heard him again leave his bed and take several hasty turns through the cottage. A stifled groan, too, occasionally disturbed her ear; it seemed as if some painful feeling, which he struggled to overcome, had forced that feeble utterance from his throat. Her attention became more intense, and her agitation more extreme, at this new instance of suppressed anguish. In a few minutes more, a long, shrill whistle mingled with the moanings of the storm; and she heard her brother hurry towards the door. She sprung up and rushed out after him; but he was gone. The impenetrable darkness only met her gaze; and the piercing blast and the drenching rain beat upon her till she almost fainted beneath their buffeting.

"George, George, where are you, George?" she cried out in agony; but her feeble voice sank unheard or unheeded in the storm. Shivering with cold and terror, she returned again to her bed; but every *sough* of the blast seemed pregnant with fearful intelligence; and again and again she hurried to the door to listen and to weep. Her condition was deplorable; but there was none to deplore it. She was lonely in her grief. Cold and hunger she had borne with patience—nay, with fortitude and cheerfulness; but the thought that her brother was leagued with some desperate band for the commission of some desperate deed—that the fair fame of her family, which had never been darkened by even the shadow of guilt, might soon be tarnished for ever—that he who was the pride of her mother's heart—

> "The favourite and the flower
> Most cherished since his natal hour,"

in a moment of guilty daring, might be hurried into a dishonourable grave; and his spirit sent, loaded with the opprobrium of men, to endure the vengeance of an offended God—this thought was more terrible than death. She even wished for that dreaded tyrant to terminate her misery; but he comes not so readily when he is courted as when he is feared.

A short time before daybreak the cottage door was again opened, and some one entered. Mary, who was still watchful, heard the first creak of the hinges, and sprung again from her bed. It was George. He endeavoured to shun her in the darkness; but she was not to be evaded. Stepping between him and the bed, she laid hold of his arm, and inquired, in a tone tremulous but tender, where he had been.

The young man felt confused by the question; but, after a short pause, he grumbled out some awkward equivocation, which Mary at once detected. His embarrassment confirmed her suspicions; and her spirit rose to her lips with an energy like the vehemence of inspiration, as she thus addressed him:—

"Dinna deceive me, George, dinna deceive me. I heard the whistle that summoned you away; and I know that you have been out the whole night—out upon some desperate errand—some work of darkness, at which men and angels tremble! O! George, George, repent of yer conduct, and abandon your wild associates ere they have led you and all that love you to ruin and disgrace. There's nothing degradin in poverty—there's nothing sinfu in starvation; but the curse of God, and the scorn of men, and the lash of conscience, will aye attend the guilty, though all the luxuries of life be within their reach. Think of yer dead mother, George, and dinna let the sight of yer desperate deeds distract her soul, an' embitter the very happiness of heaven; think of yer poor father, and dinna let yer impatient spirit break his honest heart, and bring down his grey hairs wi' sorrow to the grave; think of yer ain immortal soul, and dinna let the fear of want urge you to commit crimes that will certainly sink it to the gates of hell!"

George felt appalled, if not converted, by Mary's remonstrances. He slipped silently past her, and flung himself into his bed. Mary's words had been spoken, as usual, in an under tone; and the old man still remained ignorant of his son's mysterious absence and his daughter's distress. For several days after this, George continued thoughtful; but, though his sister pressed him often to divulge the object of his night adventure, and the names of the men with whom he was associated, it was all in vain. He only shook his head, and turned away from her questions. In the meantime, the supply of meal which James M'Donald had brought was nearly exhausted. He had not again called; and, considering the mystery in which his connection with her brother seemed to be involved, Mary began to think that it would perhaps have been better if they had never met; but she was at least grateful for his past kindness, and she earnestly wished to see him once more, only for the purpose, as she persuaded herself, of thanking him, and of trying if it were possible to draw from him any confession of those nocturnal transactions which her brother kept so profoundly secret. She now felt the necessity of taking home the articles of dress before mentioned, for the purpose of procuring some money to supply her fast approaching wants; and she sometimes thought that she would communicate her distresses to the minister, and request his assistance to preserve her brother from ruin; but as she could not do this without confessing her suspicions of his guilt, she trembled at the idea of hurting his reputation, even in the eyes of a friend. While pondering upon these matters,

> "The *dull* day roll'd along, and, with the night,
> Came storm and darkness in their mingled might."

George, whose mind seemed either strongly susceptible of being affected by the howling of the tempest, or deeply sensible of the danger or guilt of the actions which he was destined to perform during its continuance, again exhibited all those symptoms of emotion which had before excited his sister's attention, and prompted her to watch his motions. About the same time of night as on the former occasion, the

ominous whistle was again repeated, and George sprung from his bed where he had been lying, dressed and ready, listening for the summons, and darted off to the door. She too started up in an instant; but she was again too late. His form was swallowed up by the darkness, and even the sound of his feet was lost in the storm.

Mary passed another night of sleepless agony; and though she heard her brother return again about daybreak, she felt so feeble, and her last advices and remonstrances had been so little attended to, that she did not rise to receive him. But, as she believed that it was the want of honest employment that had forced him to seek subsistence from some unlawful pursuit, she determined, if possible, to go that day to the manse of N——, where she hoped to find an opportunity for interesting the minister in his condition. When she did get up, however, she felt that the desire to go was all that she possessed; the ability was quite gone; grief and privation had operated so powerfully upon her nerves, that her remaining strength was scarcely adequate to the performance of her ordinary household duties. George beheld her weakness and despondency, and began to exert himself to cheer her drooping spirit. His attempts were successful. For some time past he had been gloomy, haughty, and morose; and the return of his originally gentle and generous disposition, gave hopes that he would soon abandon those unhallowed pursuits, which had first soured his temper and sered his affections. How far these hopes were good, remains to be shewn; but, in the meantime, they did good to her who entertained them; for, in a few days, she recovered her usual degree of strength. Before she was able to set out upon her intended journey, however, the last morsel of food in the cottage was consumed; but George, who now seemed possessed of plenty of money, readily offered her a small sum to purchase more. To Mary's eye there was a degradation in its very glitter; and she shrank from the tempting coins with a shudder of abhorrence.

"No, George," said she, "I will neither touch that money nor taste the food that is bought with it, unless you can assure me that it is the reward of honest labour, or the unasked gift of pitying benevolence. Let me die of want, as my father would, rather than live by the wages of guilt."

George hung down his head, but he made no attempt to justify his conduct, or to satisfy his sister as to the source of his wealth. To relieve the wants of that night, Mary took a part of her own Sunday's dress to the village and exchanged it for bread; determining, at the same time, to visit the manse on the subsequent day. Circumstances prevented her from starting so early as she intended; and, when about to go, she was surprised to see a horseman riding up to the cottage. It was the minister of N——. He had promised to spend the afternoon with his nephew, Mr Markham, and had taken the opportunity of calling upon Mary in passing. Her heart fluttered with joy when the saw him; but of all the subjects which she intended to ask his advice upon, she now remembered not one. The minister, however, had a tact for discovering the circumstances of those who were too bashful to confess their condition, and he soon made himself acquainted with Mary's privations; her father's distress; her brother's want of employment; and, in short, with everything but her fears for George's honour, which she could neither communicate, nor he suspect.

The minister possessed a mind glowing with natural benevolence and ardent piety; and, after some time spent in prayer and serious conversation with old Robert, he pulled out his purse, and, under pretence of paying Mary for the work which she had executed for his wife, he gave the poor girl a sum of money three times the value of her labour, and took his leave, promising, at the same time, to exert himself in behalf of her brother.

Mary now felt completely happy with her purse and her prospects, and ardently wished for George's return, that he too might rejoice in her success. He had gone out in the morning without informing her of his business; but she was now too blessed for suspicion; and the only thing that she regretted was, that he should remain one moment in distress, while she possessed the power of making him as happy as herself.

George returned in the evening, and Mary met him at the door with her good news; but the look with which he received them gave no indication that he regarded them as such. She shewed him the money, but he scarcely glanced at it; she told him of the minister's promises, but he gave her no answer. His countenance displayed all that gloomy inquietude which it had manifested previous to his late mysterious adventures; and Mary began to suspect that he was again meditating upon some similar excursion. She told him her suspicions, but he neither confirmed nor removed them. She warned him that if he again engaged in any lawless pursuit, his crime would now want the palliation of being committed under the pressure of necessity She urged him, if he had formed any dishonourable connection, to break off immediately, and not bring ruin upon himself, and disgrace upon his family. She wept, and entreated, and remonstrated by turns; but her words and her tears seemed alike ineffectual.

We must now leave Mary and her brother a short time to their distress, and follow the track of the benevolent minister, who had no sooner left the cottage than he began to ruminate upon the best means of relieving them. His nephew, Mr Markham, was a pretty extensive farmer; and he determined, in the first place, to solicit him for employment to George. Nor was Mary's case neglected: he also resolved to cater, in all his visits to parishioners and friends, for sewing and knitting to her. These thoughts occupied his mind so completely, that everything else was forgotten; and he no sooner arrived at his nephew's house, and got sight of his person, than out they came, without preface or remark—even previous to the customary greetings. Mr Markham was, like himself, a benevolent man; and, though he could not help laughing at the abrupt manner in which his uncle introduced the subject uppermost in his mind, yet he cordially agreed with all the proposals of his reverend friend. After arrangements had been made for relieving the distress of the Middletons, Mr Markham introduced some topics connected with the politics of the day, and made several references to ancient history, with which he knew the minister was well acquainted, and upon which he had often heard him expatiate with delight; but on this occasion, the good farmer's orations on the wisdom of Socrates, and the conquests of Alexander the Great, only elicited some sympathetic remarks on the sufferings of Mary Middleton, and the destitution of her brother and father. All the good clergyman's acquirements in philosophy, history, politics, and even divinity, this evening seemed to be forgotten. Pity and benevolence occupied his whole heart and soul; and these feelings were wholly directed to the accomplishment of one predominating object —the relief of the Middletons. As that object was now accomplished, the purpose of his visit, though he knew of no such purpose when his visit was projected, now seemed to be served, and he was about to take his leave. But, before he went, he could not refrain from again congratulating his nephew upon the wonderful providence which had directed him to such a valuable servant as George Middleton.

"I have never seen the lad himself," he continued; "but, judging from analogy, as the rhetoricians say, I believe his qualities must be excellent. His sister, Mary, was my servant several years, and a better girl never wielded a broom in a poor man's house. I could have trusted her with three times the worth of the stipend, Harry; and

though it had been all in gingerbread and *sweeties*, which are the most tempting commodities to a female taste, I would not have lost the value of one pin-head of my property. And as to her industry, Harry, she was as busy as a bee, man. Our guidwife often said, that Mary minded things that she had forgotten herself, and only saw the propriety of doing them when they were done, and well done."

Just as the minister was concluding this warm encomium upon the character of his late servant, Mr Markham's brother, the supervisor, and a pretty large party of excisemen, entered. They had received information that a contraband trade was carrying on in the river, not far distant from the Manse of N——; and as they had determined to make an attempt on that night to surprise the smugglers, they insisted on the minister to remain till they could escort him over the hill. The good man was fond of his nephews, and fond of company; and he agreed to their proposal with very little pressing. His last and principal topic of conversation, through the previous part of the evening, was now altogether useless. He accordingly laid it aside, and resorted to that store of varied and valuable information, with which the studies of a long life had supplied him, for the amusement and instruction of his associates. Every stranger in the party was struck with deep admiration of his abilities; and the evening passed in all that harmony and hilarity which is only found in the company of honourable and intelligent men. But, at length, Mr Patrick Markham, looking at his watch, rose and said—

"Gentlemen, I am sorry that duty should ever interfere with good fellowship; but the hour approaches, and we must to horse."

In a few minutes more, the whole party were proceeding on their way at a pretty sharp trot—the minister and his nephew in front, and the rest following in such order as the condition of the road or the inclination of the riders suggested. The night was stormy, and occasionally dark; but both men and horses were accustomed to such adventures, and felt nothing disagreeable, or, at least, nothing uncommon in this. The moon was up, but seldom visible; and, when she did break out from the moving clouds, her momentary light was more startling than useful. By the aid of this light, however, the cavalcade advanced rapidly on their difficult road, which sometimes rose over heathy ridges, and sometimes winded through woods and glens where Nature still reigned in all her primeval wildness. Among these glens and braes the minister had spent the happiest holidays of his boyhood, searching for nests, and fruits, and flowers; and, even yet, he sometimes retired to these early haunts, on a sunny, summer afternoon, to renew the impressions of his youth, and refresh his senses with the song of birds and the fragrance of flowers. But,

> "Blasted now wi' winter's ravage,
> A' their gaudy livery cast,
> Wood and glen, in wailings savage,
> Sough'd and howl'd to ilka blast."

The minister and his nephew had proceeded some time in silence—the first, perhaps, recalling the feelings with which the desolate scene around was wont to inspire him; and the second pondering upon the business in which he was engaged—when the moon, emerging from a ragged cloud, shot down a fitful flash of unexpected light, and shewed the river, broad and deep, glittering and foaming at a little distance beneath them.

"Mark that, uncle!" said the supervisor, pointing to the stream. "You are nearer home than you thought, I suppose; and mark that, too," he continued, pointing to a gallant bark which was now seen standing out from the shore with every sail set; "we are more distant from our prize than we expected. There goes the accursed nest of these night-birds that we were in search of; but I hope they have deposited their eggs in the sand, like the ostrich, and we may yet be in time to *herry* them."

The minister smiled, whether at the escape of the smugglers or his nephew's remarks we cannot tell; but the party again moved on in silence, till the road which they followed was crossed by another, which winded along the banks of the river, with a hedge on one side and a plantation of Scotch fir on the other. Here they stopped, to bid each other good night; but, before they parted, the moon again broke forth; and, from the long space of clear sky which she now occupied, it seemed reasonable to expect that she would not be soon obscured. This was hailed as a happy omen by the excisemen; but there were some who did not "bless her friendly light." At that moment a cart rumbled out from an opening in the plantation, and entered the road, at a short distance from the place where the party stood. It was followed by a number of men, who were immediately recognised, by the experienced eye of the supervisor, as a detachment from the band of smugglers which they were in search of.

"There they go, my boys!" said Markham to his associates; "as pretty a gang of ruffians as I have seen in these parts yet; but we will bring them to bay presently. Good night!" he added, taking his uncle by the hand; "we must be at them directly, or they will give us the slip yet."

"Nay, stop!" said the minister; "you would not accept of a confessor, I suppose, in the hour of danger; but you can be no worse of a word of counsel, and a parting benediction, when the priest happens to be your friend. I would briefly advise, then, that in this matter you do your duty as a man, without neglecting your duty as a Christian. Remember, Patrick, that blood is seldom shed without guilt; and let this make you careful how you expose your own life, or peril the lives of others. God bless you!—Good night!"

The excisemen galloped off in high spirits to seize upon their prize, and the minister waited with an anxious mind and a watchful eye to ascertain the result of the meeting. He could soon perceive that the smugglers intended resistance; for, while one of their number proceeded with the cart, the rest formed line across the road, to prevent the advance of the horsemen. When the parties met, there was a momentary pause; then followed a long shrill whistle, which was answered from the wood. Then pistols began to flash, and swords to sparkle in the moonshine. Then horses reared and plunged; and, swerving from the blows of the smugglers, galloped back to a considerable distance before their riders could again rein them round to the charge. The minister could no longer stand an idle spectator of such a scene. Bloodshed and death seemed inevitable; and he deemed it his duty, as a messenger of peace, to endeavour, even at the risk of his own life, to moderate the rage of the combatants, and, if necessary, to administer counsel and consolation to the dying. With this object in view, he spurred his horse in the direction of the fray; and a number of the horses of his friends, wanting their riders, passed him as he went. When he arrived at the scene of strife, he discovered that the excisemen had dismounted, and were now engaged, hand to hand, in a desperate conflict with the smugglers. A number of the men, on both sides, were severely, though not mortally wounded; but among those who still fought, the minister could perceive his nephew engaged with a tall, young man, who seemed more than a match for him. The reverend gentleman immediately dismounted, and, beating down their weapons with a stout stick which he carried instead of a riding whip, he threw himself between the combatants for the purpose of parting them; but the smuggler, mistaking the object of his interference, attacked him as a fresh enemy. The minister, in early life, had

been fond of gymnastic exercises, and he now turned the skill which he then acquired to some account, by warding off the blows of his assailant. Few blows, however, were exchanged, when a young woman sprung from the neighbouring plantation, and, rushing between the parties, cried—

"George, George! you shall kill your sister before you harm the minister." Smugglers and excisemen were alike startled by this extraordinary apparition; and there was an instant cessation of hostilities on both sides. The young man who lately appeared the most powerful and daring of his band, now stood mute and motionless before a feeble, unarmed female. Mr Patrick Markham and his party soon formed a wondering circle around the tall smuggler and their fair ally, while the minister recognising her, advanced and took her by the hand. An explanation was soon given. Mary Middleton and her brother were now surrounded by a body of excisemen. The last mentioned individual was their prisoner; but he wanted not friends even among those who secured him. The rest of the smugglers availed themselves of this opportunity to escape. They hurried into the plantation, dragging their wounded along with them; and any attempt for their apprehension was now deemed useless. The minister took Mary under his protection; but it was with great difficulty that he could prevail on her to leave her brother, who was now marched off, under the charge of Mr Patrick Markham and two of his assistants, to the nearest jail.

Though George had promised that he would not attempt to run away, his conductors determined not to trust him with an opportunity for doing so. They accordingly walked one on each side of him, while the third rode behind with a cocked pistol in his hand. While proceeding in this order, and near the place of their destination, as they were passing a small wood, two men sprung upon them, and the supervisor was unhorsed in an instant. His companions, too, were secured by their unexpected assailants, who, both at the same time, cried—"Run, George—run for your life!"

"Run yourselves!" said George. "I have promised not to run, and I will not. If I wanted to escape, I would need no assistance; but provide for your own safety. Away, I say, and none shall pursue you for this time at least." He seized an exciseman by the breast with each hand, and held them fast.

"Ha, M'Donald!" cried the supervisor, who had got again upon his legs, "are you too among the gang? I will soon bring you to a reckoning for this, my boy," he added, advancing to seize him. But the young man and his associate sprung again into the wood, and a bullet from Markham's pistol whistled harmlessly through the trees as they disappeared.

We must now return to poor Mary. She had watched her brother's departure from her father's cottage, and, aided by occasional glimpses of moonlight, she had followed him over the hill, and witnessed—herself unseen—all his operations with the smugglers. When the affray commenced between them and the excisemen, terror overpowered her, and she sank down senseless among the bushes. Her perceptive powers had just begun to return, when the minister rode up to the combatants; and, discovering her old master in danger of bodily harm from the hands of her brother, she had obeyed the first impulse of her heart, and flung herself between them. After all this exertion and excitement, the reader will readily believe that poor Mary was completely exhausted both in mind and body. She was; but a friend was near who possessed both the will and the ability to assist her. The good minister mounted her upon his own horse; and, leading the animal with his own hand, conducted her in safety to his own house. The worthy old man was fond of a sober joke; and, when they arrived at the manse, he rung the bell, which was answered by his wife in person—

"Here, Janet," said her husband. "I've brought you a whole horse's load of sterling worth. Mary Middleton was aye a favourite; but when I tell you o' the wonders she has performed this night, she will be even as a daughter to your heart."

We need hardly say that Mary was received with the greatest kindness by the good lady of the manse, whose sympathies were ever active when sufferings of any kind, but more particularly when the sufferings of the virtuous poor were in view. The poor girl's mind was still sadly racked with apprehensions about her father and brother; but her fears were somewhat quieted, when the minister assured her that her father would be provided for, and that he would endeavour to secure his nephew's influence in behalf of her brother. This promise was soon fulfilled. On the next day he again visited his nephew, who accompanied him to the prison where George was confined; they talked with the young man a considerable time, and offered him pardon if he would give up the names of his associates; but this he sternly refused to do, assuring them, in substance, that, though he sincerely regretted his connection with such a set of villains, yet, were he to betray them, he would regard himself as the greatest villain of all. His visiters left him, but not in wrath. The minister was highly pleased with the lofty principles which prompted him rather to suffer himself than to betray others; and Mr Patrick Markham allowed that there was a spark of nobility about the lad, which rendered it an honour to get a buffet from his hand.

After all this, the reader will not be surprised to hear that George's punishment was limited to a few weeks imprisonment. Nor will any one feel displeased at being informed, that when the story of Mary's sufferings, heroism, and martyr-like integrity of character, was known, it drew upon her the admiration and applause of every generous spirit in the neighbourhood. Presents poured in upon her from all directions, and, among the rest, the excisemen who witnessed her conduct presented her with a valuable memorial of their respect. Some said, however, that one smile from the runaway M'Donald would have cheered her heart more effectually than the applause of all the world beside; but he had not been heard of since the night on which he attempted the rescue of her brother.

Our story is now complete. We have shewn what the sterling principles and virtuous exertions of a young and delicate girl could endure and accomplish. In Mary's case they not only preserved the life of a venerable and beloved father, but also rescued a rash though high-minded brother from the very vortex of crime—where, but for her, he would have continued to whirl, till those noble feelings of his nature, which scorned the illicit traffic in which he was engaged, had been deadened and destroyed by familiarity with guilt, and nothing had remained but perverted energies, "for better purpose lent," to perish in the horrid ruin of a desperado's doom.

Trusting that many readers of the "Border Tales" will admire the virtues of our heroine, and pardon the attempt of her historian, we shall conclude by intimating, that some incidents in her after life will be brought under their notice on a future occasion

THE CRUISE OF THE PIBROCH;

BEING THE SEQUEL TO MARY MIDDLETON.

The little seaport of K—— has long been considered one of the most dangerous on the west of Scotland. It is surrounded on all sides by large masses of submarine rocks, among which, in ordinary weather, vessels of moderate burden, if skilfully piloted, may pass with considerable safety; but when winds and waves are high, the breakers occasioned by these hidden masses rage with such fury, that it is almost reckoned certain destruction to venture within less than a mile of the shore. In such cases the mariners have only two alternatives: they must either stand out to sea, or endeavour to find anchorage in the bay till the storm abates. But in some states of the tide, and when the wind blows from a certain direction, they have no alternative at all; and hence wrecks, even in the very mouth of the harbour, are no uncommon occurrences. Many a gallant ship has escaped all the perils of the most tempestuous sea and gone to pieces there, while her hapless crew might, ere they sank to rise no more, see, from the staggering mast or the separating deck, the houses which they were destined never to reach; many a time, too, has a group of weeping wives and children assembled on the beach,

"To hail the bark that never would return;"

and witnessed their husbands and fathers perishing amidst the breakers, almost at their feet. A painter of eminence might there have found scenes upon which to exercise his art, capable of moving the sympathies of civilized men through generations. But, with the exception of an occasional paragraph in the newspapers, no notice has been taken of those distressing events, which have so often been seen by a few, and so soon forgotten by all save the mourning widows and helpless orphans, whose oft returning wants recalled to their minds a fainter feeling of the agonies which they had endured on those days of storm and terror when their protectors perished. It is probable that the present humble attempt is the first that has ever been made to describe the dangers of this now little-frequented harbour, and yet we are convinced that the materials for many an interesting and pathetic tale are to be found among the obscurest inhabitants of the place. Almost every family is connected with the sea; and there are few of them who have not been called upon, at one time or other, to lament the loss of some of their members.

This little community, though they speak the same language as the other inhabitants of Scotland, have many customs as peculiar as those of the Indians or Greenlanders. Indeed, they have so little connection with the people in other parts of the country, that they might almost be looked upon as a distinct race. They have married and intermarried so often, that the whole inhabitants of the village may be said to bear some family relation to one another; and, when any great calamity occurs to one part of the sept, the rest sympathize with them in their sorrow, and exert all their abilities to remove it; nor are they less ready to rejoice with those who rejoice.

We have thus described the little sea-port of K——, and its humble inhabitants, as they appear at the present day; but both were somewhat different about thirty years ago. The little harbour was then sometimes honoured by a visit from a frigate or a sloop of war. Occasionally, too, a daring smuggler, who considered himself safest when others feared most danger, dashed through the breakers, and delivered his illicit cargo before the custom-house authorities were aware of his intention. Nor were the revenue cutter and the press-gang strangers in the port; but these were not the most welcome of its ocean friends. Thither the stately privateer dragged her disabled prizes, and the people hailed her approach with a shout of triumph, in which national pride was associated with the prospect of personal profit. Hither, too, the gallant "Letter of Marque"* brought her valuable commodities, and her honourable captures; and the young men of the place gathered around her with wondering enthusiasm, to listen to the narrow escapes she had made, and the bold exploits she had achieved.

We have said that the coast is dangerous—begirt with breakers and formidable waves—and that wrecks frequently occur in the very mouth of the harbour. Thirty years ago these catastrophes were even more common than they are now; because, then, more vessels traded to the port, and fewer precautions were taken to point out the hidden rocks upon which so many had inadvertently struck and gone to pieces. But, in a community like that of K——, where every individual was connected by some degree of friendship or consanguinity, and where all were animated by that courage which familiarity with danger confers, and that generosity which is almost always the associate of true courage, the reader will readily believe that many noble attempts were made to rescue the crews of those vessels which unfortunately struck upon the rocks, or swamped amid the breakers. Among those, however, who were most active on these occasions, was one who had no other connection with the village than that of a stranger trading to its port.

Captain Cameron was master of a small armed merchantman; but no one knew the place of his nativity, nor the condition of his family. His ship seemed to be his whole property, and his home was on the deep. But his daring endeavours to save the lives of his fellow-men, had rendered him dearer to the hearts, and greater in the eyes of the people of K——, than if he had been related to them by birth, or adorned with the titles of rank, and the importance of wealth. Of the last, however, he was supposed to know no lack; for he had been as successful in capturing the property of his country's foes, as he had been in saving the lives of his country's friends. He was a perfect Paul Jones for courage and sagacity, with this difference, that he had less tyranny and more patience in his disposition than that celebrated personage. No case in which the lives of men were in peril was too desperate for him to engage in. He never stood to calculate the danger which he would incur to himself by making the attempt: it was sufficient to shew him a fellow-creature struggling with the

* This name was applied to those merchant vessels which, either with or without a license for reprisals, carried arms for their own protection, or for the annoyance of the national enemies.

waves: no promise of reward was necessary to prompt him to instant exertions for his rescue: he immediately sprung to a boat, and the simple question asked by the clear and manly voice of Captain Cameron—"Who will put to sea for the sufferer?" generally brought more volunteers to his assistance than he could accept of. Every young man was glad of an opportunity for signalizing himself in the interprises of such a bold and successful commander; and it was considered the highest compliment that could be bestowed upon a young woman of the place, to say, that her suitor was along with Captain Cameron when he saved the crew of the Eliza or the Mary. In cases of great difficulty and danger, however, he generally found the ablest and most willing assistants among the crew of his own little vessel. They were so strongly attached to their captain, and had so much confidence in his skill and dexterity, that nothing which he proposed was too fearful for them to undertake. Such was his celebrity in the village, that whenever a ship was seen to be in danger, the general cry was—"Is the Pibroch in port?" "Tell Captain Cameron." This village fame was sometimes dearly bought; for, independent of the danger which always attended his benevolent adventures, he seldom failed to get himself completely drenched among the breakers, which, of itself, was no very comfortable consideration in a cold winter day. Nor was this all; though he set out in a boat, frequently without a single companion, he often parted company with her in the storm, and returned again to the beach, with a half-drowned wretch on his back, and nothing but his own brawny arms to support both through the boiling surf. If we add the tossing and dashing which he sometimes received among the sharp shelving rocks of the shore, to the desperate exertions by which he succeeded in reaching it, it will easily be conceived that he possessed a body more powerful than ordinary men, and a mind endowed with more than a common share of boldness and benevolence. Had he not possessed the first, he would have perished in his first enterprise; and wanting the second, he never would have engaged in another.

While Cameron had thus acquired an honourable reputation in port, he had become not less famous on the seas; but his celebrity there was of a different description. Foreign privateers were then cruising in all directions, and his little ship, like every other British merchantman, was liable to their attacks—more so, perhaps, than most others; for her diminutive dimensions induced them to think that she would be an easy prize. A little experience of her courtesy, however, convinced most of them, that what she wanted in bulk was more than made up for by her quickness of motion; and very few who had received her salute, again endeavoured to cross her course. The Flying Dutchman, or any other demon who haunts the great deep, would have been as welcome acquaintances, ever after, as the little Pibroch. Strangers, however, who were not familiar with the capabilities of the vessel, and the dauntless spirit of her commander, sometimes mistook their prey; but the first *bum* of the Highland bagpipes, which Captain Cameron always kept on board, and frequently employed previous to an engagement, for the purpose of inspiring a part of his crew, who orginally belonged to the hills—dissipated their delusion, and taught them—sometimes when it was too late—that they had caught a Tartar. The fame of the Pibroch had run so completely through the whole class of pirates and privateers which then infested the seas, that many, who knew nothing of the mould of the ship or the character of her crew, identified both by the first note of the war-pipe, and immediately shewed as strong a disposition to shun her as they had previously done to make her their prize. Some of them, however, had the satisfaction of discovering that she was more easily found than lost again; and also, that Cameron had no objection to take a slow-sailing enemy in tow when he happened to be bound for his native coast, and had no other business of importance to interfere with his friendly purpose. But as we have a story to tell, in which particular instances of his prowess, both in port and at sea, will be given, we shall not weary the reader with any more general remarks on his character.

The Pibroch had just returned from a voyage, which had been extremely prosperous, both as regarded her trading interest and her warlike fame. She had brought a valuable cargo and a rich prize along with her; and both were safely moored in the little port of K——, when the clouds began to assume that livid hue, which, to the experienced eyes of sailors, bespeak an approaching storm.

"We are just arrived in time, my boys!" said Captain Cameron, as the last rope was made fast to the pale. "Those who may attempt to cross the bar, half-an-hour hence, will have a rougher ride, and a shorter passage too, mayhap, if yon clouds do not belie themselves."

A very short time sufficed to shew that his anticipations were just. The wind began to whistle, at first in short and inconstant gusts, as the faint forerunners of the storm reached them, then louder and more steady, as the whole force of the tempest rushed roaring through the shrouds. It blew from the west. Of all directions this was considered the most dangerous; because, in such cases, it was most difficult to avoid the lee-shore. The breakers began to rage, and foam, and dash, in all their accustomed madness; and every eye was directed to the offing, for the purpose of discovering if any unfortunate vessel was within the range of their fury.

"Bring the glass, Dick!" cried Cameron to his mate, as he swung himself into the shrouds. "I have a small sail in my eye, and I promise her some hard tossing and tumbling, at least if she bears this way, before she weathers yon beautiful little Charybdis of our own seas!" He applied the glass to his eye, and continued—"A small craft, indeed, Dick—well-manned though—four men and a—a lady—yes, a lady, by Neptune! too fair a sailor, by far, for this stormy weather. Hold to your partner, girl—don't start, Jack!—a lady's fingers will not injure that stout arm of thine. That's it, boys—take another reef yet. There, finely done!—now she rides it nobly."

He handed the glass to his mate, and began to rub his hands with all a sailor's glee, as the little vessel rose proudly over every successive wave which overtook her. The crew of this small boat (for such she was) had found that it was impossible to beat up against the storm; they had also found that she could not live for a moment with such a sea running upon her quarter; and, though they must have seen the breakers foaming a-head, they had no alternative but to risk all and run for the shore. By this time a crowd from the village had assembled upon the quay; and, as she neared the surf, every eye was turned upon her with intense anxiety; but the moment that she entered it, Captain Cameron pronounced her lost. The manner in which she was managed convinced him that the crew were entirely unacquainted with the danger of the port; and without waiting a moment for the fulfilment of the anticipated catastrophe, he sprung into a boat, and, in his usual manner, called out to the spectators who crowded the beach—

"Who will go to the help of the sinking boat's crew?" For a short time no answer was returned. The most experienced sailors in the port looked in each other's faces and shook their heads as if they doubted the propriety of exposing their lives in such a hopeless enterprise. "Will none of you put to sea to save the poor fellows from perishing?" he again asked, turning to his own ship as he spoke.

"Hold on there for a little, captain!" cried a gray-headed

veteran from the deck of the Pibroch; "hold on for a little, till I get my head-gear belayed, and sink she or swim she, I'll take an oar for the poor lady's sake. Though we ship a sea by the way, there's neither wife nor wean to lament the loss of old Will Dempster."

He seized a piece of cord, and placing it over his old tattered hat, tied it tightly under his chin. He then buttoned his jacket, put a large quid into his mouth, and jumped aboard of the boat. The mate and two others of the crew followed his example. Cameron took the helm, and the four men placed themselves by the oars.

By this time the little vessel had nearly reached the middle of the breakers; but here a tremendous wave overtook her, and, doubling over the stern, stunned the poor steersman so much that he put the helm aport, and she immediately staggered about with her broadside to the storm. The fatal result of this mistake was soon announced by a loud shriek from the females who witnessed it from the quay.

"Give way, my brave fellows!" cried Cameron to his men. "We may yet be in time to pick up some of the poor wretches."

The oars at once struck the water, and the boat shot from the shore with all the velocity which the utmost strength of four able-bodied men could give. A loud shout of applause burst from the assembled spectators, as she dashed among the breakers. Every heart beat high with excitement at the daring attempt; and many a rough lip uttered a prayer for the safety and success of the noble adventurers. The boat of the strangers was now observed floating with her keel uppermost; her crew had gone to the bottom, with the exception of one man and the lady, who still clung to her side. They were occasionally washed from their hold, and lost amidst the curling foam; then they were again seen struggling back to the drifting wreck.

"He's a true hearted chap yon," said old Tom Squint, rubbing his hands with gladness, as they reached it. "He holds to his fair un gallantly there; and they'll drown together, I presume, unless Captain Cameron should tip them a rope's end by and by. Blow me! if I wouldn't make a song about them, if I could spin verses as well as young Ned Rattery there."

Cameron and his brave shipmates were now in the greatest danger. Several waves had broken over their boat; and two of the men were obliged to abandon their oars for the purpose of baling out the water. They had nearly reached the wreck; but it was still doubtful whether they might be able to render any assistance to the poor pair who clung to it for life. Their boat frequently disappeared between the successive waves which rolled, with foaming foreheads, to the shore; and every spectator held his breath with dread till she again mounted into view.

"Steady now—steady, boys!" cried the deeply-excited Tom Squint. "You have a *topper* a-head, which, mayhap, will be too much for you; but, weather it, and all will be well again."

At that moment, the eyes of the whole crowd were directed to a tremendous sea, which, unlike all that had preceded it, rolled on with a slow majestic swell, as if it would bury the whole harbour in its mountain-like mass. The boat's crew seemed to be perfectly aware of their danger. They turned their faces to the wave, like men who were determined to meet death with their eyes open; and many a cheek grew pale, and many a prayer was said, as it swept over the little wreck, engulphing the helpless pair who clung to it, and rolled on to those who seemed vainly endeavouring to save them. It did not break, however—perhaps on account of its great magnitude, which raised it high above the rocks that fretted its less powerful companions into foaming madness—and the light boat rose over it in gallant style, then plunged on the opposite side, and was lost to every eye. The crowd kept gazing for her reappearance in the most breathless anxiety. Every moment seemed an hour in that interval of agonizing suspense

"She's swamped—she's swamped!" cried a young sailor, whose impatience had made him reckon the time since her disappearance much longer than it really was.

The fearful words reached the ears of a large body of women, who were crowding together upon the pier, and gazing with trembling earnestness upon the terrific scene. It is well known that the hearts of females are most easily affected by deeds of daring and generosity. Cameron and his men had excited their admiration in no ordinary degree, by his many noble attempts to save their friends and townsmen; and the young sailor's announcement drew from their lips a simultaneous burst of lamentation. Old Tom Squint, who was himself too much distressed for listening with patience to the noisy distress of others, turned round upon the fair mourners, and exclaimed—

"Hold your tongues, you screaming owls! If the boat is down, do ye think that your howling will bring her up again? But there she is," he added, tossing up his old, battered hat in the air with such vehemence that it flew over the tower of the castle, and was never again seen. And there she was, sure enough, breasting another wave, with another man added to her crew, and a lady in his arms for a passenger.

The whole crowd, women and children not excepted, joined most heartily in the hearty cheer with which old Tom accompanied the elevation of his *sou'-wester*. The short but dangerous voyage, however, was as yet only half-accomplished; but the successful manner in which the first and most difficult part of it had been performed, gave hopes that it would terminate well. The boat still kept her head to the storm, and continued her seaward course. She was alternately seen and lost, as she rose and sank over each successive wave; and the inexperienced part of the spectators could not help wondering at the strange conduct of the crew, who were thus, as they deposed, getting deeper and deeper into danger, instead of turning and running directly to the shore for safety. But the old tars, who mingled with the multitude, answered these murmurings by asserting that Cameron knew when to turn again.

After clearing the breakers, and waiting till several heavy waves had passed, the boat swung safely round, with her head to the port; and this motion was hailed by another deafening cheer from the crowded quay. She again approached the surf; and again waited her time. After another billow had heaved her high upon its moving summit, she again sunk, and became invisible to those who watched her progress from the beach. In a short time, she was observed between two waves—one receding rapidly before her, and another advancing as rapidly behind. The object of the crew, evidently, was to keep her in that position till she stranded on the beach; and every man was straining his utmost strength to prevent the pursuing billows, whose front of curling foam threatened them with certain destruction, from overtaking her. The captain had abandoned the helm, and taken his place beside old Will Dempster, whose tough oar bent like a bow beneath their united force at every stroke. The stranger whom they had picked up from the wreck had turned in with the mate, and even the half-drowned lady lent her feeble aid to their exertions. The boat rushed rapidly to the shore; and, just as she touched it, the pursuing wave burst upon her stern; but its horrid roar was scarcely heard amidst the deafening shouts with which the crowd on the quay hailed the safe return of the little

vessel and her gallant crew. The only mischief which it effected was the drenching of those who were already too much drenched, and who felt too glad at their wonderful escape, to think for a moment on this additional ducking.

Captain Cameron sprang to the shore, and handed out the lady; and the rest followed them as fast as they could. The whole multitude now crowded around them—not to congratulate: for they were not a congratulating people. The formal civility of refined society was unknown to them; but they strove with one another who would offer most kindness, in their own rude way, to the strangers, and most honour to their preservers. Accommodation and dry clothes were pressed upon them by as many individuals as could get around them at the same time. Every one seemed so anxious for the honour of entertaining them, that the poor strangers seemed completely perplexed to know which of the many offers they received to accept. The lady stood shivering in her wet clothes, exhausting all her fund of politeness in suitable acknowledgments to the host of comforters, who pressed her so hard with their hospitable intentions, that she seemed in a fair way to be killed with kindness. Her young companion stood by her side, looking first to her and then to the crowd, as if he scarce knew what to say or think.

Old Will Dempster's patience at length wore out over this long parley, and, pushing the good dames aside, in his own rough way, he made a clear passage to the lady, whom he immediately seized by the hand, and exclaimed—

"Blow me if I'll hear more of this botheration—axen your Ladyship's pardon for this freedom. The ould crones 'll bombard you with hot rooms, and warm blankets, and dry petticoats, and all that sort of thing, till you sink for want of sea-room in the midst of them; but let an ould tar take you in tow, and you shall have the best trousers in my locker, and the best cabin in the Pibroch to rig in withal. I promise this in behalf of my captain, who never denied ould Will Dempster a favour, when he was in the right on't."

"Avast there, Will!" cried Cameron; "the cabin is at your service; but your trousers won't suit the lady; so bring the best pair of mine that you can find—jacket, shirt, and all, for the gentleman; and Mrs Bowline here will supply his partner, and afford both dry docks to refit in."

The old tar departed immediately to execute the orders of his officer, and the old women reluctantly resigned to Mrs Bowline the enviable honour of entertaining the strangers. Cameron took the lady's arm, or, as he expressed it, took her in *tow;* but before they left the spot, she turned to her companion, and said—

"Remember the brave men who saved us, Richard."

The young man pulled out his purse, and, presenting it to the captain, asked—

"Will you take the trouble, sir, to divide this among your noble crew? 'Tis a small acknowledgment for a service which money cannot repay. I am sorry it is so small; but I have nothing more."

"Put up your money, sir," said the captain; "you may yet have need of it; but my men would think me worthy of a round shot in a blanket were I to play the shark for them after that fashion. They shall hear of your generosity, however; and they will not think less highly of me for not taking advantage of it."

The party now proceeded to Mrs Bowline's, amid the cheers of the crowd, who still followed them in triumph; and here again the kindly hospitality of the people of K—— was exhibited in a ludicrous manner. Those who had been deprived of the satisfaction of accommodating the strangers, had determined, at least, to contribute to their comfort; and, in a short time, many a kind-hearted matron was seen hurrying to Mrs Bowline's with the best articles of apparel which her family could furnish, dangling upon her arm. Here was one with her daughter's linsey woolsey gown and clean check-apron; there was another, with tippet, hood, and *toy;* following these was a third, with hose, shoes, and shirt; and so on, till Mrs Bowline's little parlour presented the appearance of a clothier's shop, and the young lady had more suits of apparel to select from, than she could have carried across the room at many times on her back.

After this information, the reader can have no apprehensions about the safety or comfort of the two strangers. We shall therefore return to the Pibroch, to which Captain Cameron had also returned. Old Will Dempster, however, had got back to the ship before him; and, as the whole crew were anxious to know if their captain had heard anything of the history of the strangers, old Will was deputed to search him upon that subject at his return; and he no sooner set his foot on deck, than the hearty old tar hailed him in the following manner:—

"So you've got the young gallant and his consort safely moored beneath the lee of Lucky Bowline's parlour, I suppose. She's a pretty good-looking craft—the fair un I mean—and, shiver me, if I were a young fellow like you, but I would take her in tow for good and all—fair weather and foul. She would heave-to in a moment at your salute. And then, what a helpmate she would be at mess-time. That little son of a varlet, Jim Scud, could neither clean the pots nor dress the dishes half so elegantly, I'll warrant him. But knows you anything of her reckoning, Captain, or where she is bound for?"

"I happen to know something of both, Will," said the captain, good-humouredly. "I have seen the damsel before; but, as I now bear different colours, I hope she knows nothing of me. She has come from home lately; and she is at present, along with her brother, bound for his ship, in which she intends to make a coasting voyage for the benefit of her health, if this day's sailing does not put the pleasures of a sea life out of her fancy."

"Oh, it's only her brother she's got alongside, then?" said old Will. "There's not a single sail between the lady and yourself, Captain. Square your yards, and run down upon her at once; and if she does not put her helm aport, and beat up to you with all her canvass set, never call old Will his own name again."

"You have been too long awhistling among the shrouds, Will," said the captain, "to know anything of the art of love. I, who am but a youngster, can recollect the time when, like all other land lubbards, as you call them, I too had a mistress. But never mind, I have a story of my own which I may perhaps tell you, to divert the time on some lazy afternoon at sea; but we must man the windlass now, and clear out as fast as possible."

"Blow me if I don't see through it now," said old Will, seizing a handspike. "You have taken some snug little galiot in tow before, and you will not heave a rope's end to another before you have brought her into port; and I do not doubt but you're in the right on't; for, judging by her rigging, she must be a big un, yon.

Truly you are a far-sighted fellow, Will; but this is a consummation which my ambition never ventured to anticipate. I fancy, however, that the young lady is a *big un,* as you say; for her brother offered me a purse to be distributed among you, which was worth more than half our ship's cargo, I warrant."

"Avast there, Captain," cried old Will; "you didn't take it anyhow, I hope; for smash my timbers if I'll finger a single farthing of it; hoosomever, it was very gentlemanly of the good youth to offer it."

After a few days of hard labour, the Pibroch was delivered of her cargo, and, provided with victuals and amuni-

tion for another voyage, she again put to sea with every sail set, and a fair wind to fill them. But on the evening of the same day on which she left the harbour, just as the crew were beginning to lose sight of land, the man on the mast sang out—

"A ship ahead, sir."

"What course does she bear," cried Cameron, rubbing his hands, and glancing around the deck to see that everything was as it should be, when such an announcement was made.

"She's on the larboard tack, sir," cried Bob Bowline; "and beats this way, I suppose."

"What is she like?" cried the captain.

"Can't tell yet," cried Bob. "She's in the sun's wake just now; but I will see the cut of her jib more clearly in a little. There," he continued, "I don't like the look of her, sir. She's a schooner-rigged rakish-looking lubburd."

"The best of the evening to her, then," cried the captain. "If she intends to try the smell of our guns, we must have hot work with her, or darkness will spoil the game, I fear; but keep your course, sir; we have the windward of her at anyhow, and we will discover her intentions by and by."

The sun was now hovering on the verge of the horizon, and shedding a long stream of silvery light along the waves, which seemed heaving with animation beneath its influence. The unbroken swell was shadowed, on either side, by large masses of cloud, which lay piled in gloomy confusion above the sinking orb, and seemed to indicate an increase if not a change of the wind, which was now blowing fresh from the east. The Pibroch was dancing on in the finest style, with studding-sails set, and all hands on the alert. The deck was cleared, the guns loaded, the boarding-pikes and cutlasses laid in order, and everything prepared for action, when the strange schooner hoisted French colours, and made a signal to them to bring to.

"Bravely done, Monsieur," cried Captain Cameron, slapping his hands together. "We will bring to presently, my gay cousin; but you must dance to the Pibroch first, and learn something of Highland hospitality, before we break bread together. Give him a broadside, my boys, and I will tickle his ears with a tune."

"Ay, ay, sir," responded the crew, gleefully. "Tip him 'Up and Waur them a' Willie,' and we will beat time with the carronades on his timbers to it."

The deck was now a scene of bustling but orderly activity. Every man hurried to his post. The gunners stood with their lanyards in their hands, and their eyes upon the captain, who now seized the bagpipes, and blew a few rapid notes. This was the well-known signal for hostilities; and the whole broadside went off, gun after gun, in thundering succession. The Frenchman seemed stunned by this unexpected salute, and gave some indications of a desire to sheer off; but it was only a manœuvre, for he soon came round again, and returned the fire with great spirit and good effect. The injury which the Pibroch sustained was chiefly in the rigging, and it was soon repaired. Night, however, began to close in around them. The dark hulls of the vessels became invisible; but, as long as a white sail was discernible, they continued to blaze away with undiminished vigour, though with greatly diminished effect. Utter darkness at length parted them, and restored peace to the deep. Both vessels concealed their lights, so that none of them knew the course which the other had taken, or the distance which now lay between them.

"So the rascal has escaped us," said Captain Cameron, as the last shot was fired, rather in the direction where they last saw the enemy, than at any visible object; "but never mind, my boys; we have peppered him a little under the larboard wing, I presume; and, though he perhaps thinks we have escaped *him*, if he has the conscience to look an old foe in the face, we may yet meet again, with a longer day to settle differences in. Bring to, there!" he continued. "We will waste one night waiting upon Monsieur, since he has had the courtesy to give us a visit upon our own coast."

The vessel was immediately brought up upon the wind, and the necessary precautions taken to prevent her from changing her place; and as it was suspected that the enemy might be dodging about at no great distance, a double watch was appointed to keep a sharp look out on all sides, till morning. But though they frequently fancied that they could hear voices both on their larboard and starboard bows, and though their excited imaginations sometimes presented them with the appearance of a sail on their quarter, yet no substantial or authentic traces of the Frenchman were discovered till day again dawned upon the deep.

About sunrise, the wind veered round to the west, and began to blow with considerable violence; but the louder it whistled it was the more musical to the ears of the rough band which now crowded the deck of the Pibroch. Its sudden change, to them, was ominous of good; for the increasing light shewed them their enemy, several leagues to leeward; and the increasing gale promised them a rapid run to renew the attack.

The little vessel was brought round to the chase in an instant; but she had not scudded far when the man at the mast head sang out—

"The Frenchman has found his consort!" and at that moment a vessel of similar size was seen shooting astern of him on the starboard tack. He immediately put his helm down, fell round in the same direction, and fired a gun at her. This salute was answered by a broadside; and Cameron called out to his men:—

"Cheer up, my boys; Monsieur has found an enemy; and though we may lose a prize, we shall, at least, be in time for the sport. Out with your studding-sails! and, mark me, Tom"—addressing the man at the helm—"let the masts go overboard if they will; never look at a rag of canvass, but keep the Frenchman dead over your bows, and we shall have a crack at him before he knows which hand to turn to."

While the Pibroch was dashing on before a freshening breeze, as if competing with the waves upon which she rode, her crew kept gazing with intense interest upon the two belligerent vessels, which were now giving and receiving broadside after broadside, in rapid succession. Both ships were managed with great skill; but the Frenchman seemed best adapted for the species of service in which they were now engaged. The other neither answered the helm so well nor sailed so quickly, and these defects soon began to be felt by her crew, who, with all their exertions, could not prevent the enemy from raking them occasionally in a most unmerciful manner.

As the Pibroch approached, the effects of the destructive fire, which had been so well kept up on both sides, became evident. Ropes were severed, and sails fluttered loose in the wind; bowsprits were shattered, yards carried away, and portions of the bulwarks broken, in both ships. But the Frenchman had suffered least, which was a certain indication that the other would continue to suffer most, as she was every minute becoming less manageable. At length, one of her masts went overboard; but it still remained suspended by the larboard shrouds, and, ere it could be cleared away, the flag—the British flag—was struck, and borne off, like an autumn leaf, whirling upon the breeze. It was a bad omen; and every brow grew dark, and every eye flashed fire, which beheld it. The crew of the Frenchman, however—unlike the custom of their countrymen—fought in silence. No shout of triumph was heard as the mutilated banner fluttered away to leeward; but, if there was triumph in the circumstance,

it was of short duration; for ere a minute passed, another flag was proudly displayed, from the shattered stump of the last remaining mast, and the three hearty cheers, with which its developement was hailed, from the deck of the Pibroch, floated down upon the breeze, and convinced the brave men who unfurled it that assistance was at hand.

The purpose of the Frenchman was now evident to all. He bore close down upon his intended prize, which was so much disabled as to be entirely unfit for either fight or flight. She was a complete wreck; but she still bore men upon her shattered deck whose high national valour would have scorned to yield her last floating plank an uncontested prize to a foreign foe. Pistols and cutlasses were now distributed among the men, and other preparations made for giving their enemies a warm reception, when they attempted to come on board. Captain Cameron could easily perceive the intention of the French, and the determination of the British officers, and his commands were given accordingly.

"Monsieur will be aboard of the schooner directly," said he; "and his object is to have the crew under hatches before we can come to their assistance."

"Smash my timbers if he does though!" cried old Will Dempster, squirting an exhausted quid over the gunnel.

He shall taste a hard breakfast, Will," said the captain, "before he pull down yon pennon from the mast-head. But stand to your guns, my boys. The honour of your country is at stake. Run down upon his bows, sir," turning to the man at the helm; "rake him fore and aft; then put your helm down, and lay me aboard of him at once."

The Frenchman soon came alongside of his expected prize, which was so completely shattered, both in hull and rigging, that it seemed a question whether she would swim or not till the contest was ended, which was to settle to what country she should hereafter belong. The crews of the two vessels now met in closer and more deadly conflict—a conflict, the result of which depended more upon the courage and activity of the men than upon the swiftness or manageableness of the ships. The boarders were more numerous, but they were neither more resolute nor more active than the defenders. A sharp volley of small arms was discharged, then the cutlasses were drawn, and a most desperate hand-to-hand struggle commenced. Both parties were too eagerly engaged to observe the approach, or even to hear the guns of the Pibroch; but the loud shout with which her dauntless crew sprung upon the Frenchman's deck, startled the combatants, and occasioned a sudden change in their expectations. The cheer was returned from the deck of the British vessel; and a short, thick, swarthy-looking fellow, in a foreign uniform, who was among the first of the boarders, turned to those who followed him, and, brandishing his cutlass, with a sailor's oath, and a Scottish accent, commanded them to face about to the larboard. "Give the dogs no quarter," he added; "you will receive none. Conquer or die."

"No quarter then, you piratical rascal!" said Captain Cameron, endeavouring to force his way to the speaker; "but *you* shall have quarter on a yard-arm, you merciless miscreant," he added, striking down the man who interposed between him and the officer.

The pirate crew—for such they appeared to be—seemed composed of men from many different nations, and, shame to tell! old Scotland had furnished her own quota of desperadoes to that bloody band. They were now surrounded on all sides; but they fought as such men have always done, with the silent savage desperation of the dying wolf. The combat was now carried on upon their own deck. They had been beat back from the Mary—the vessel which they had attempted to board—and her crew and the crew of the Pibroch frequently cheered each other from the starboard and larboard sides of the *Rose de Guerre*, whose desperate company fought back to back between them, without asking mercy or uttering a word, save when a volley of imprecations announced the fall of some of their number. The strife was too close and fierce to be of long duration. The short, thick man, before mentioned, who appeared to act as the captain of the pirates, was already down, but not dead. Even in that helpless condition he seemed dreaded by his men, who formed a circle around him, but carefully avoiding treading upon any part of his person. He still continued to give his commands, mingled with many oaths, to his fast diminishing band; and when any of the men happened to fall across him, though mortally wounded himself, he spurned the expiring wretch away with all his remaining strength, as if he had been determined that even death should not diminish his dignity. He attempted, by two or three convulsive efforts, to raise himself from the horizontal position in which he now lay; but they were ineffectual, and he rolled to one side with a fiendish glare of disquietude flashing from his eyes. At length, summoning up all his remaining physical power, to insure the accomplishment of his last demoniacal desire, he struck the deck with his foot, several times, with great violence, and cried, or rather screamed, with frenzied accent—

"Down, down, every dog of you! Fire your last gun, now, and send us all one way at once." The remaining crew of the *Rose de Guerre* immediately disappeared through one of the hatches.

A shot, or it might be several shots, had entered on the windward side of the vessel, and, following a direct line—she being then swung over to leeward—had passed through the deck, tearing up some of the planks. Through this aperture Cameron dropped himself into the powder room, calling out to his men—

"Follow me, my brave fellows! or they will blow us all up in an instant." Every man dashed in after his leader, and the crew of the Mary followed the pirates down the hatchway. They were just in time to prevent a most fearful catastrophe. One of the pirates was running forward, with a cocked pistol in his hand, to fire the magazine, when Captain Cameron met him, and struck up the weapon, which went off without producing the premeditated effect. After some hard fighting, the pirates were beat back into the cabin, and there secured as prisoners. A strong guard was placed over them, and the two captains, with the rest of the crew, returned again to the deck.

During the heat of the action there was no time to recognise old acquaintances; but now, when it was over, the commander of the Mary at once discovered that he was again indebted to his former preserver for his present rescue.

"Captain Cameron," said he, approaching his deliverer in a rapture of enthusiastic gratitude, which none but the generous and the brave can feel, "I again owe my own life, and the lives of my men, and the lives and honour of a sister, and a—a friend, who are dearer to me than all beside, to your prompt and heroic exertions. Come, George," he added, turning to a young man who stood near him, and who was now employed in scrutinizing the captain's face with a look of mingled admiration and surprise—"Come, George, bear a hand with your acknowledgments to our gallant friend here; and we will call up the girls directly, to express their gratitude in their own way. They shall sing *Te Deums*, and sew samplers, and knot ribbands, in honour of your victory, sir, for all their lives to come. My sister, Nan, has been chanting your praise, night and day, ever since you so nobly saved her and me from sinking among the breakers, in the bay of K——."

The young man who was called upon in the former part of this address, still stood gazing upon Cameron in wondering silence. The oddness of his manner attracted the cap-

tain's notice, but his glance had no sooner fallen upon the individual's face than he bounded towards him, holding out his hand and inquiring—

"How are you, Middleton? and why are you here?"

"So it is just yourself, M'Donald!" said the other, smiling, and seizing his hand with friendly eagerness. "Why, man, there was a wonder raised between my old eyes and your new name which quite confounded me. Where have you been; and what have you been doing these many long years past?"

"You will hear all that in due time, George," said the captain; "but you must answer me a few questions, first."

"As many as you please," said the other.

"Well, then," said the captain, "is your sister, Mary, alive?"

"She is!"

"Is she married?"

"No!"

"Does she ever speak of *Jamie*;"

"Often!"

"Well, blow me, as old Will Dempster says, if I am not the happiest man alive, now. But, come, let us look to the wounded; poor fellows, their groans are heart-rending."

He turned to the captain of the Mary, whose countenance seemed agitated with some inexplicable feeling, which he vainly strove to suppress. Captain Cameron (we retain the assumed name, because the crew of the Pibroch could never be prevailed upon to use the real one) imputed his emotion to sympathy for the dying men, who lay groaning around him in many a mangled heap; but George, or, as we should now say, Mr Middleton, seemed to guess the cause more correctly, and his face also became flushed, and his manner confused.

"Come, come, my brave friends," said Cameron, who observed the embarrassment of both, "let us not stand idly lamenting over these poor men; but let us endeavour, by active exertions, to alleviate their sufferings." He began to examine and to bind up the wounds of both friends and foes, and the other two followed his example. Some were moaning piteously, without being aware that they were doing so. Others, whose wounds were more distant from the seat of sensation, were striving with desperate pride to suppress every murmur of pain. Among the last mentioned, was the short thick man, who seemed to act as the commander of the *Rose de Guerre*. He was lying on his back, with a deep wound in his side, through which his life-blood seemed ebbing fast; but, when Captain Cameron approached him, he grasped his cutlass, which was lying near him, and made an effort to rise.

"God forgive you, M'Derrick!" said the captain, as the dying man again fell back upon the deck. "This is a desperate end to a desperate life! Why did you leave the disreputable trade of a smuggler, to engage in the more dangerous and villanous trade of a pirate?"

"Begone, you mutinous dog!" said the other, shaking his cutlass at the captain, and scanning his face with a stare of fixed unutterable hatred. "I am no pirate, as you may see by examining the ship's papers. But how is this? Why do the devils come to torment me now? It is she!—yes—it is she!" His eyes rolled fearfully round, and his countenance, which had always been dark, became doubly horrible. "The living and the dead!" he continued; "yes, all—they come—they come! but I defy them all! Begone, you grinning old French fiend! Take back your ship, if you will; but I defy you, I curse you, and you, and you, and you," he added, striking with his cutlass at every individual phantom with which his tortured imagination presented him; but, at the fourth stroke, the weapon fell, with the hand which held it. His eyes were staring open; his hands were clenched firmly; his mouth was gaping; and his whole visage distorted and ghastly—he was dead!

"How terrible is the death of the wicked!" said a soft, tremulous voice. "May God preserve us from such crimes as lead to such an end!" Captain Cameron looked behind him, and there he beheld two young ladies, with bandages and other articles for dressing wounds, in their hands. They were pale and trembling; but terror could not disguise the features of one of them. He clasped her in his arms, and exclaimed—

"Mary!—my own Mary!—I have found you at last!"

Mr Middleton and his friend were now engaged binding up the arm of a poor tar, who had been severely wounded; but when Captain S—— beheld Miss Middleton in the arms of Captain Cameron, he dropped the hand of his patient, and staggered a few steps backward. His eyes flashed, his lip quivered, and his whole frame shook. He advanced a few steps, then retired, and then hurried down the companion ladder, as if to conceal his agitation from the gaze of the crews. When he returned, he was composed; but his countenance was pale and sad.

All hands were now called off to the Mary; and, after long and arduous exertion, she was cleared of water, and her leaks closed up; but, as she was too much shattered to continue her voyage, it was deemed necessary to take her back into port for repair. The papers of the *Rose de Guerre* were then examined, and it was found that she was authorized, by the French Government, to make prizes of British merchantmen; but the name of Captain M'Derrick did not occur in the diploma, which gave rise to suspicions that the phantom Frenchman whom he defied in his dying struggle, had been despatched by criminal means, for the accomplishment of some ambitious purpose.

Before the Pibroch again proceeded on her cruise, Captain Cameron invited Captain S——, Mr Middleton, and the two ladies, to dine with him; and, as their past history, and present circumstances were involved in some mystery, he proposed that each individual should tell his story, from the period at which they last met. He began by narrating his own adventures; but, as we cannot afford room for them in his own words, the reader must be content with the brief abridgement which follows:—

After James M'Donald, and the smuggler who had solicited his assistance, had made the attempt to rescue George Middleton from Mr P. Markham, and the other excisemen, as narrated in the former story, he deemed it unsafe to return to his old place and occupation. He was, therefore, easily induced by the smuggler to accompany him. Poor James was thus forced into a situation for which his strength and daring spirit were admirably adapted; but his love of justice, and his desire for honourable employment, rendered him miserable amongst his wild and lawless associates.

After performing several voyages under the command of the same Captain M'Derrick, whose death scene we have described, as James and he were one day walking upon the beach, at some distance from the village of N——, a young lady of uncommon beauty happened to pass them.

"Hark ye, M'Donald," said the captain, following the girl with his keen black eye; "we have long wanted a wench to superintend the mess and other matters on board of the Scuttler; here is one that will suit our purpose exactly. Bring her to there, and I will make signal for the boat."

"I will not!" said M'Donald.

"Dare you disobey orders, you dog!" said the other, springing forward and seizing the lady, who vainly shrieked and struggled in his tiger grasp. M'Donald rushed to her assistance, and the enraged captain pulled out a pistol and discharged it at his head. The bullet missed him; and, in a moment more, the lady was at liberty, with her enemy stretched senseless at her feet.

"Run, madam!" said M'Donald; "you are still in danger, and I may not be able to protect you long." The

boat was now seen approaching the shore, and the lady hurried off in one direction, and her deliverer in another.

"Do you not recognise me?" said Captain S——'s sister to Captain Cameron, as this portion of his story was narrated; "do you not recognise me as the poor girl whose life and honour was then, and have since been, twice saved by your noble exertions.

After this quarrel with his captain, M'Donald, who had acquired considerable experience of a sailor's duties, determined to seek employment in some more honourable service. For this purpose he visited the port of K——, and was soon engaged to the Pibroch, which was commanded by Captain Cameron, in person, who was also proprietor of the vessel. As M'Donald was ashamed of his late adventures, for the purpose of concealing them, he determined upon adopting a new name; and, thinking that it might do some good, and could do no harm, he assumed that of his new captain. He was soon promoted to the station of mate; but, in a skirmish which took place shortly after, between the Pibroch and a French privateer, Captain Cameron was mortally wounded, and, while he lay bleeding in the arms of his mate, with his little boy weeping by his side, he uttered the following brief sentence:—

"Cameron, you already bear my name. This ship and this boy are all that I possess in the world—command the one, and be a father to the other; and, as you do your duty, may the blessing of God be with you!" He closed his eyes and almost instantly expired.

While narrating this part of his story, Captain Cameron laid his hand upon the curly head of a spirity little fellow who stood between his knees, and said—

"This is my son—this is my captain, Mary; will you be a mother to him?"

The reader is now acquainted with the outline of Captain Cameron's history, from the period at which he was introduced under the name of James M'Donald, in the previous story, to the period at which he again appeared to Mary Middleton, as commander of the Pibroch, under his assumed name.

We must proceed to give a brief sketch of George Middleton's narration of that part of his life which was comprised between the same two epochas. In the preceding story we left him a prisoner for smuggling; but, when the weeks of his confinement were past, by the benevolent exertions of the venerable minister of N——, he obtained a situation as porter to a trading company, with whom the good clergyman was connected through his son, Captain S——, who was lately introduced to the reader as commander of the Mary. George's acquirements and steady character soon gained the confidence of his employers, and he was elevated to the situation of a clerk. Longer service produced greater promotions. He passed rapidly through every post of trust, and was, at length, appointed principal manager of the company's business. His father and sister lived along with him, supported by his income and honoured by all who knew them. He was acting as supercargo on board of the Mary when that vessel was attacked by the *Rose de Guerre*, and his sister and Miss S——, with the last of whom he was soon to be married, had gone along with their two brothers for the benefit of their health.

This is the substance of Mr Middleton's narrative; and, when it was concluded, Captain Cameron begged his brother officer, Captain S——, to gratify the company with a recital of his adventures during the same period.

"I have nothing of importance to relate," said he; "and anything which I have to tell is disgraceful to myself; but as it is at the same time highly honourable to one whom every person present greatly esteems, I shall not shrink from the task. About the time, then, when you so nobly rescued my sister from the ruthless arms of the smuggler, I was making love to a beautiful young orphan who was possessed of the most amiable disposition, and the most accomplished mind. I was sincere in my attachment, and it was answered with equal sincerity. Our love was strengthened and confirmed by the experience of years. To me no face was so fair, no form so handsome, and no mind so refined as Julia Marchmont's. I dreamed not of any one who could rival her in my affections—neither did she. But the hearts of men are deceitful—so was mine. Another lady came to live in the neighbourhood. I saw her and loved her—and loathed myself. She became the friend of Julia, and she was worthy of her confidence. She heard all her secrets, but she revealed none of them. To this lady I offered my heart, which had been so lately another's. She heard me with patience, and answered me with tears. She assured me that Miss Marchmont's affections were wholly my own. She warned me that if I deserted her, the consequences might be such as would render me miserable as long as I lived. With respect to herself, she confessed that there was no man alive who stood higher in her estimation than I did; but her heart had been given to one whom she believed to be dead, and it could never be given to another. I heard her, I admired her, I loved her the more, though the purity of her affections and the noble constancy of her principles were a pointed satire upon my own infidelity. I saw the man whom she supposed to be dead return. I beheld her in his arms, and almost fainted at the sight. But some good angel, doubtless, came to my aid, and directed my feelings into the proper channel. But who do you think, Captain, was this noble-minded woman?"

"Why, I can't guess," said Captain Cameron; "but I admire the character, though I know nothing of the individual."

"Look there!" said the other, pointing to Miss Middleton, whose face was suffused with blushes. "Look there, and see if you can find in that countenance any confirmation of the truth of my story. Yes, Captain, it was your own lovely, amiable, true-hearted Mary. May God bless you both! You are both worthy of each other; and I shall never cease to rejoice over, and be grateful for, the Divine Providence which brought about this happy meeting; nor shall I ever forget to venerate the woman, whose pure, immoveable virtue, restored my wavering fidelity, and preserved the life of my poor unsuspecting Julia."

Captain S——, at his return, confessed the whole affair to Miss Marchmont, and was graciously forgiven. Her's was a heart in which resentment never reigned—it was strong in its affections, generous in its emotions, and gentle in its sympathies. Disappointment might have broken it, or grief withered it; but for the stormy feelings of anger and revenge it had no place. She was a Christian. They were united—they were happy.

Shortly after, Mr Middleton became the husband of Miss S——; and his sister Mary—the humble heroine of the "dear years"—about the same time gave her hand and heart, and all that she possessed, to James M'Donald, *alias* Captain Cameron, with whom she lived, and is, perhaps, still living, a happy and honoured wife. To his poor orphan *protegé* she acted the part of a kind and affectionate mother, and he loved her and addressed her as such.

WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE DROICH.

On the evening of that eventful day which saw Patrick Hamilton, Abbot of Ferne, the young and learned Scotch proto-martyr to the Protestant faith, bend his head and resign his soul at the burning stake, in the head-quarters of Scottish superstition—St Andrew's—a young man was slowly bending his steps from the scene of execution towards his home, a good many miles distant. The effect produced by that day's proceedings was, as is well known, felt throughout all Scotland, where the scene of martyrdom was, as yet, one of these *mira nova* which startle a country, and extort, from the innermost recesses of the heart, thoughts and feelings as new as intense. In the case of Hamilton, there were many features calculated, in an eminent degree, to strike deep into the minds of a sympathetic and meditative people; and, doubtless, his birth, descended from the royal house of Albany—his learning, derived from the deep wells of Mair's philosophy—and his extreme youth—were not the least impressive; yet there was something in the mere *manner* of his death—abstracted even from the species of immolation not altogether new to Scotland, cruelly mangled, as he was, by an awkward or cold-blooded executioner—that deepened and rivetted the effect produced by the extraordinary scene of his martyrdom. If casual or merely curious spectators might dream of that scene till their dying hour, we may form some estimate of what the friend and college companion of the martyr—for such was the young man whom we have now introduced to the reader—felt and thought, as, with eyes bent on the ground, he prosecuted his journey homewards, after witnessing the execution. Imbued himself with the spirit of the new faith, he had that day seen it proved, in a manner little less than miraculous. One of the softest and gentlest of mankind, who would have shrunk from the sight of pain inflicted on the meanest of God's creatures, had been enabled, by celestial influence, to stand, in the midst of a scorching and destroying fire, undaunted, unmoved, with smiles on his countenance and words of exhortation on his lips. The feelings of the religionist were roused and sublimed by the contemplation of one of heaven's marvels; but the pity of the man and the friend was not lost in the admiration of the heaven-born fortitude that simulated total relief from bodily agony. Tears filled the eyes of the youth, and were wiped away only to rise again with the recurring thoughts of the various stages of the trial and triumph of his beloved friend. He had already wandered a considerable distance; but the space bore no proportion to the time occupied; for he had sat down often by the roadside, hid his face in his hands, and been lost in a species of charmed contemplation of images at which he shuddered.

While yet some miles from the end of his journey, the shades of night began to fall o'er the undulating heights that form the end of the Ochil chain to the west; but, as yet, the sun, the only object seen in the whole horizon, appeared in full disk, red and lurid, like the mass of ember-faggots which, some hours before, lay in the street of St Andrew's, surmounted by the blackened corpse of the martyr. The traveller turned his eye in the direction of the luminary; but quickly passed his hand over his brow, from an instinctive feeling of horror, as a dim wreath of cloud, stretching along the superior part of the fiery circle, seemed to realize again, in solemn magnificence, the sight he had witnessed. The altitude of the object which suggested the resemblance, with the gorgeousness in which it was arrayed, again claimed the aspiring thought, that the spirit of his friend, sublimed by the doctrines of the new faith, was even then journeying to the spheres which he contemplated. The final triumph of the martyr was completed in the scene of his agonies; and the seal of eternal truth was, by God's finger, imprinted on the doctrines he had published and explained in the midst of the melting fire of the furnace. Placing his hand in his breast, he drew forth the beautiful Latin treatise which his friend had composed on the subject of the justification of the sinner, through a believing faith in Him who was foretold from the beginning of time; and, sitting again down by the side of a hedge, he struggled, in the descending twilight, to store his mind with some of those precepts which were destined to claim the reverence of an enlightened world. He was soon lost in the rapt meditation in which the spirits of the early Reformers rejoiced amidst the persecution with which they were surrounded, and was again in regions brighter than those of this world, in communion with him who, when the flames were already crackling among the faggots, cried out—"Behold the way to everlasting life!" From the exalted sphere of his dreamy cogitations he looked down with a contempt which, as his head reclined among the grass, might have been observed curling the lip of indignant scorn upon all the thousand corruptions of the Old Church; its sold indulgences, its certified beatifications, its pardons, its soul-redeeming masses, its chanting music, its sins, and its ineffectual mortifications. The bright spirit of Christianity, arrayed in her pure garment of white, was before the view of his fancy; her clear, seraphic eye beamed through his soul; and, with finger pointed to heaven, she invited him to brave the pile and the persecution of men, and gain the crown which was now encircling the temples of Hamilton. He thought he could, at that moment, have died as his friend had perished, and that the pangs of the circling flames would have been felt by him merely as the smart pungency of a healing medicament, which the patient rejoices in as the means of acquiring health.

How long he remained under the influence of this beatific vision, he knew not himself. He had fallen asleep. He opened his eyes: the sun had now gone down into the western main; and all that was left of his glory was a thin stream of wavy light, which, shooting across the dark firmament, looked like the wake of the passing spirit of his friend on its journey to heaven. He arose. The searching dews of evening had penetrated to his skin; a cold shiver shot through his frame; and again, clutched by the humbling and levelling harpies of worldly feelings, fears, and experiences, he felt all the terror of his former sensations, when he beheld the corpse of the martyr sink with a crash among the embers, which, as they received the body, sent forth a cloud of hissing, crackling sparkles of fire, mixed with a dense cloud of smoke.

"Alas! this spirit of mine is strong only in dreams," he muttered to himself, as the shiver of the night air passed over him. "It is as the eagle of Bencleugh, which, with his eye in the sun and his feet under his tail-plumes, will resist the storms that shiver the pines of the Ochils; yet bring him to earth, and draw one feather from his wing, and he can only raise a streperous noise amidst the sweltering suffocation of his earth-crib."

He had scarcely uttered the words, when he saw the short, thick figure of a man coming along the road, enveloped in a gown, and bearing a stick like a thraw-crook in his hand. Starting to his feet, he stood, for a moment, to see if he could recognise the individual.

"Good even to ye, young Master o' Riddlestain," said the individual, as he came up, and was recognised by the youth—"Good even to ye; and God send ye a warmer bed than the hedge-beil, and a caulder than ane o' bleezing faggots."

"Good even, Carey," replied the youth. "I return your salutation. The one lair, as a beadsman of Pittenweem, you may have experienced ere now; the other you stand in small fears of. From St Andrew's, if I can judge from your allusion to the sad doings of to-day in that part."

"Ye guess right," replied the beadsman, as they proceeded forward, side by side; "but how could you guess wrang, when every outlyer and rinner-about in the East Neuk has been this day at the head-quarters o' prelacy. A strange day and a selcouth sight for auld een. Its no often that Carey Haggerston carries a fu' ee and a fu' wallet."

"Then you were moved by the fate of poor Hamilton, Carey?" replied the youth.

"And wha, Papist or heretic, could stand yon sight wi' dry een?" replied the man, in a voice that trembled in the sinews of his throat. "I wad hae gien a' the bodles the prelates threw me—the mair by token, I think, that the puir callant was writhing in the fire-flaughts o' their anger—for ae stroke wi' this kevel at the head o' yon culroun caitiff o' an executioner. The bonny youth was roasted as if he'd been a capon for the table o' the cardinal, only there was mair smoke than might hae suited his Lordship's palate, I reckon."

"You have got a good awmous, Carey, will sleep sound, and think nothing of it on the morrow," said the youth.

"Anster Fair was naething to it," replied the beadsman. "The scene seemed to open the hearts o' prelates and priors, that never gave a plack to a bluegown before. I held up the corner o' my gown beneath the chapel o' the cardinal, and, sure enough, there were mair groats than tears fell into it. Ah, sir, though my wallet was yape, my heart was youden. But we're near the haugh road to Riddlestain, Master Henry, and, as the night is loun and light, I carena though I step up past the Quarryheugh wi' ye."

"You may expect small alms from the Droich," said Henry.

"No muckle, I dare say," replied the bluegown; "but I stand in nae fear o' him, and that's mair than the bauldest heart o' the East Neuk can say. I wad stroke the lang hair o' the creature any day for an awmous, unearthly as he is."

"Know you aught of this extraordinary being, Carey?" said the youth, as they turned up the haugh loan.

"Ye're no the first nor the hundredth that has put that question to the beadsman," replied the other, as he looked up, with a side-glance, in the face of the questioner. "Everybody thinks I should ken auld Mansie o' the Quarryheugh—the mair by token, I fancy, that naebody on earth kens mair o' him than just that he is a hurklin, gnarled carl, wha came to the Quarryheugh some months syne, and biggit, wi' his ain hands, a beild which has mair banes than stanes in its bouk."

"I know more of him myself than that, Carey," said the young man.

"What ken ye?" rejoined the other, with a laugh.

Henry's silence was probably meant as a quickener of the beadsman's garrulity.

"Ye may ken, maybe," said the other, "that he speels the side o' the Quarryheugh—that is, whar there are trees to haud by—like a squirrel, swinging frae ae ryss to anither, and sometimes dangling over the deep pool aneath him, like a showman's sign-board, or a gammon frae the kitchen ciel o' the Priory o' Pittenweem; but the creature's legs are nae bigger than an urchin's, while his trunk and arms are like the knur and branches of an oak. What ken ye mair o' him? What kens ony ane mair o' him, an it bena that he has been seen, in the moonlight, howking the banes o' the dead Melvilles o' Falconcleugh frae the side o' the quarry, whar it marches wi' the howf o' the auld house that stands by the brink? An auld wife's tale, doubtless, though maybe he needed the banes for his biggin."

"I believe the people in these parts would know more of him were they not afraid to go near him," said the youth. "They stand peeping over the quarry brink at him, as if he were the 'guidman of the croft,' Mahoun himself."

"And nae ferly either, Henry," said Carey; "for his face speaks as clearly o' the skaith o' fire as did that o' Patrick Hamilton when yon gust o' wind drove the flames to the east, and shewed his cheeks—sae pale, alace! and like a delicate leddy's, as they aince were—burnt as brown as the wa's o' Falconcleugh House there."

The two speakers had now arrived at the old mansion of the Melvilles, which stood on the brink of the deep crater, whose high sides had procured for it the appellation of the Quarryheugh. At the side or end next the chasm, rose, beetling over it, a high turret, perforated in several stories by small embrasures, and surrounded by three tiers of bartisans. From this flanking strength, the two side walls—relieved, at intervals, by circular projections containing spiral stairs—ran back and were terminated by an ordinary gable, the inclined sides of which were cut in gradually receding steps. The care which seemed to have been taken in securing the casements by closed shutters within, indicated, more certainly than did the general appearance of the weathered house, that, though unoccupied, it was still deemed suitable for serving the uses of a dwelling, and that the choughs and stannyels that perched on its roof were mere tenants at will, and might be removed on a day's warning. For a considerable distance around, there was nothing to be seen but a bare heath, the dark brown aspect of which suggested the probability of its having been swept by the destroying flames of Muirburn. Even the few straggling boulders that shot up their gray heads through the scanty gorse stems, springing from their bases, wore a black, scathed appearance, as if they had still retained the traces of the ravage of the sweeping scourge. Hidden, except to near gazers, amidst this wild waste, and shelving down from the tower of the mansion, the chasm or quarry, in the form of a huge crater, lay deep and still, with a dark mass of greenish-hued water reposing like another Dead Sea in its bosom. Around two sides of it, where there was a sufficiency of soil to support them, grew a number of stunted pines, the heads of none of which appeared above the superior circle; but, dipping down, added to the darkness of the water beneath, by the shadows they flung over its surface. At the eastern part, and where the pines in that direction ended, there seemed to have fallen down a large portion of the superincumbent bank, whereby there was formed a species of island, whose nearer edge might be about ten feet from the bank from which it had been severed.

On this insular spot, which was now accessible from the

mainland by means of two pine trunks thrown across and wattled together, lived the extraordinary individual whose form and habits had, in the conversation of the two speakers, been, in a partial manner, described. The small domicile he had reared for himself was entirely composed of materials supplied by the chasm in which it was situated, and constructed in the rudest manner of a self-taught artist, whose object was to shield himself from the inclemency of the weather, without any view to comforts which he either despised or deemed it unsafe or improper to indulge. It was, indeed, a mere rough sheilin, with four walls, composed of rubble stones, mixed with—what probably excited more wonder than all the other supernatural attributes of the place, and the being himself—a due proportion of bones, collected from the cemetery of the family of Falconcleugh House, which had, on some disruption of the sides of the chasm, been laid open on its western side. The roof was supported by one or two rough trunks of pines, thrown in a slanting direction across, and composed of small twigs and leaves, wattled and compressed in such a manner as to save the inmate from a part, at least, of heaven's more profuse inundations.

The bare and scorched wilderness around, over which the eyes of the beadsman and his companion were wandering, as they approached the scene of their conversation, had now resigned its embrowned hue, for the not less dreary and mystic tinge of the blue light of the young moon as she struggled with the falling darkness. The circumstance of the still unseen chasm being tenanted by the only living mortal within the circumference of the bleak waste, and he himself calculated, by his unusual formation of body, and imputed mystic powers and attributes, to aid the pregnant associations connected with his lonely condition, was, by those acquainted with the locality of Falconcleugh Muir, naturally combined with the dismal celebrity of the place for these deeds of violence so common at that period in Scotland. Whatever may have been felt by his less imaginative companion, whose familiarity with the overt proceedings of the occult powers of the waste and the ruin may have blunted his perceptions of the supernatural, it is at least certain, and assuredly no marvel either, that Henry Leslie surveyed the scene around him with the feelings natural to the time and the country when and where he lived. The dark figure of the house rose before him, claiming the homage due to the genius of the place, where it was almost the only object that arrested the eye. Replete in itself with the elements of gloomy associations, connected with the fate of the once happy Melvilles who resided there, it threw a wizard power over the surrounding heath-waste, investing the bleak inanity of Nature's most negative condition with an interest which could not have been possessed by her multiform productions. The absence of material objects of thought lent even a species of positive character of inspissated essence to the blue haze of the atmosphere, which seemed to hang like a mighty sea in the deepest stillness of Nature's silence. For some time, neither of the parties had uttered a word. The brush of their feet on the heath, and the sound of their breath, were magnified by the silence into noises that to the younger of the two seemed startling and painful.

"Hooly, hooly," muttered the beadsman, as his last step brought him to the chasm; "loun and canny, young master—loun an lightly," he added, as he sat down on what seemed to have been a step of a ruined porch, close by the building, and by the brink of the shelving heugh. "Eh! but this silence is gousty and elric. That corbie's graen was like the roar of a lion. Didna ye think the drum o' yer ear would crack wi' the sound?"

Henry seated himself by the bluegown on the stone, and they both turned their eyes down on the deep hollow, where the waters seemed as dark as the Stygian stream.

"I hear nae stir in the howe," said the beadsman, "and see naething but that rickle o' a house standing on that eerie pinnacle, like a craw's nest on the tap o' a tree in a glen. The creature's surely sleeping after his day's wark; for he works like a dergar, and nae man kens what at. He makes neither wicker corbins nor quhorls, like the rest o' his Droich species."

"Hist! Carey; heard ye not a noise?" said the youth.

"A hungry stane hawk spooming down the quarry after some raven that has been picking the bones o' the Melvilles," replied the other. "Wear-awins! there's a sad change on Falconcleugh now," he continued, as he turned his face to the walls. "The fire o' the ha' has been eighteen years extinguished; and when it may be lighted again, it will be to warm fremmet blude o' the spoiler o' the auld family. Heard ye that Gilbert Blackburn o' Kingsbarns, the commendator o' Pittenweem, is shortly to tak up his residence here, whar, methinks, he has as little right as the puir beadsman."

"No," replied Henry, as, keeping his eye on the house of the strange inhabitant, he lent his ear to the gaberlunzie man.

"It is even so," continued the old man. "It is now eighteen years, come the time, since George Melville, the last o' his ancient race, was burned for a heretic in Bourdeaux. He was driven frae that mansion there, and the braw lands o' Falconcleugh, by Gilbert Blackburn, the persecutor o' the heretics, even he wha had a hand in raising the black stake at the Cross o' St Andrew's the day. I saw his ee, red as the burning faggots, fixed on the puir youth. I'm thinking I didna thank him for his awmous."

"You seem friendly to the heretics, Carey, yet live by the kirk," said the youth, withdrawing his eye from the chasm.

"The kirk's penny has as many placks in't as a heretic's—the mair by token, they hae baith three," replied Carey. "I hae my ain thoughts o' the auld faith and the new doctrines; but its better to live by the altar than be burned on't."

"It might have been well for the earthly part of Patrick Hamilton had he observed your worldly wisdom," said Henry.

"Ay; but his soul wadna hae been in yon blue lift the night," replied Carey, looking up to the sky. "Na, na, nor might that o' puir Falconcleugh have been there afore him, if he had bowed his head at the auld altar. Yet *he* tried to save his body by fleeing to France—vain flight, for his persecutor, Kingsbarns, wrote incontinent to the authorities at Bourdeaux, to watch him as an enemy to the holy kirk. Then cam the sough, as pleasant to the ears o Kingsbarns as the wastlin winds to the outlying bluegowns, that his victim was burned. His bonny wife, ane o' the Blebos wha fled wi' him, died o' a broken heart; and now, they say, the race is dune. Wisht! wisht! Gude and the rude! what's the creature doing among the trees o' the howe at this time o' nicht?"

A rustling noise arrested the ears of the speakers; and Henry's eye was turned in the direction of the sound. The short, stunted figure of a man was dimly seen down among the pines, working his way along the face of the precipice, by means of his arms alone, swinging from one stem to another, and occasionally resting for a moment, by remaining suspended, in an apparently dangerous and fearful, yet perfectly composed manner, over the water in the deep basin of the crater. Continuing this operation, in which there was clearly exercised an extraordinary brachial power and energy, he approached, with marvellous rapidity, his dwelling; and, by one or two more salient movements, in which there could not be observed, any more than in his prior progress, the slightest use made of his inferior ex

tremities, he came to the wattled trunks lying across the cleft. Seizing these with the same extraordinary power of grasp, he hung for a few seconds in mid-air, suspended by the hands; then, by two or three successive throws and jerks, which made the pines bend and creak, he reached the insular height whereon his hovel was erected, and drawing himself up, he sat down, apparently in a resting attitude, upon the brink of the riven bank. In this position he remained for a considerable time, with his head bent downwards, as if he were wrapped in deep meditation. The rough croaking of some crows that had been disturbed by the rustling movements he had made among the pines ceased, and, in the hushed silence that again reigned over the bleak waste, there might have been heard his deep inspirations, as he drew breath after his exertions. Turning round, and applying himself again to his hands, he began to move along on the narrow space between the walls of his house and the edge of the height, making his arms the principal instruments of his progress, and using his short inferior extremities as subserving agents. The motion thus produced seemed to be a compromising medium between the crawl and the spasmodic jump of a wounded quadruped; yet he made rapid progress; went round the small dwelling, and was seen again at the other side in an attitude which shewed, that, however ineffectual his lower limbs might be in the operation of ambulation, they could yet support his broad, thick-set trunk. Standing erect, he exhibited an elevation of about four feet and a-half, a stature which—in an individual of corresponding dimensions in other members—might not have been sufficient to entitle him to enter the pale of the "Droichs;" but when viewed in relation to the almost gigantic breadth of his chest and shoulders, the troll-like size of his head, and the extreme length of his arms, could not fail, when seen through the medium of the moonlight, and in the locality of a blasted heath-waste, to suggest a relationship to some of the stout "elfin" of Scandinavian fable.

The two spectators felt all the charm of the feelings of the supernatural in watching the motions of the eremite; and, probably—in so far, at least, as regarded the younger of the two—the interest was deepened by their total inability to understand his motions, as, having looked stedfastly for a few minutes down into the chasm, he again betook himself to his qudrupedal amble; entered his hut, and emerged with something in the form of a large volume—the brass clasps of which glittered in the moonlight—bound to his waist. The small space between the door and the end of the wattled trunks he cleared by a series of short, rapid, bounding strides, without the aid of his arms; and throwing his body again on the ground, he remained in that position for a few minutes, after which he again seized the end of the trunks, swung himself along them, and entered among the trees. The dark figure of his body was now indistinctly seen moving, by the same yerking, propulsive throws, from tree to tree, by which he had cleared the space before; and, getting beneath the shadow of the mansion, he disappeared from the view of the spectators, at the same time that the cracking of a branch, 'mid the sound of a splash in the water, came upon their ears. They neither heard nor saw more of him. The deepest silence reigned everywhere; and the dreary scene seemed as if in an instant deprived of every trace of living sound or motion save the deep-drawn breath and palpitating throbs of the heart of the younger of the two observers. Overcome with the pressure of awe, he sat bound to his stone-seat, and turned his eye on the face of the beadsman, where he found an expression very different from what he expected.

"Is the creature not down in that dreadful basin of pitchy waters?" muttered he.

"And if he were," replied Carey, as he twinkled his gray eye, unmoved, in the face of the youth, "what would ye do, young Master o' Riddlestain? Seek him as the baron did his brood-sow in the well, on the top o' the towering Bech, and maybe find mair than ye want—a furrow o' young water elfs? Na, na! let him alane—he'll no drown. He's maybe even now kissing some water-queen in the bottom o' the loch."

The youth looked inquiringly in the face of the bluegown; but the same expression was still there. He was sorely puzzled: the feelings of humanity were throbbing in his heart in audable pulses. The old beggar was in one of his humours, and held him by the skirt of his coat as he attempted to rise; while at the very moment, as he imagined, a human being was perishing in the waters. He sat breathless, with his ear chained to the abyss, and his eye searching in vain for some traces of meaning in the face of his arch companion. The same hushed stillness pervaded the scene of dreary desolation; neither the sound of a death-struggle nor of living motion could be distinguished, and it was as difficult to account for an individual endowed with life and the desire of self-preservation drowning without a sigh or groan, as it was for the sudden disappearance of every trace of a still living being in the dismal abyss into which he had so mysteriously descended.

"It's a' owre now, at ony rate, Master Henry!" said the bluegown, adding to the youth's perplexity by a hint so directly opposed to his prior confidence: "The deil mair o' a sound comes frae earth, water, or air, than that croak o' a raven that even now flew o'er the quarry loch. We'll e'en be seeking hame, I think. I hae back to the road to Pittenweem to gae, and ye've a mile a-gate between ye and Riddlestain. Gude e'en to ye!"

And, without even troubling himself to look over the quarry brink, the beadsman began his ordinary half-trotting pace; and, in a short time, Henry saw him, in the distance, making rapid progress over the heath. Meanwhile he was himself at a loss what to think or what to do. The strange manner of the beadsman led him at one time to suppose that he was satisfied that no misfortune had occurred to the inhabitant of the quarry; and at another, his parting words, joined to the inexplicable disappearance of the extraordinary individual, inclined him to an opposite belief, and filled him with painful feelings of self-crimination for not having rendered a timely assistance in behalf of a fellow-creature. He could not yet move himself from the spot. Placing himself on his breast, he looked over the brink of the chasm, gazing through between the trees on the deep, sullen pool, which, like a sleeping monster, satiated with prey, lay as still as death. His ears were not less occupied: for a space, not less than half-an-hour, he lay in this position, without seeing or hearing the slightest indication of anything that might solve the mystery. He was enveloped in the gloom of his own personal experiences of the day. The thoughts of the calcinated corpse of Hamilton, and the speaking spirit of the wild place where he lay, all combined with the painful feelings of the inquiry in which he was engaged to render his mind susceptible of morbid influences, and fecundative of supernatural creations of awe. He resolved frequently to rise suddenly to escape from the depressing yet charmed influence of the places and the inexplicable circumstances connected with it, and re-resolved, on the following moment, to endure still the creeping sensations of fear that run over him, in the hope of getting the mystery cleared up. His watch, however, still proved ineffectual. More time passed, but the silence continued unbroken by any sound, save, occasionally, the flap of a night-bird's wing, as it floated past, or the dying-scream of a victim, awakened to die in the talons of the hawk. Rising, at length, he cast another look over the chasm, and bent his steps to Riddlestain.

When he reached home, he found his parents waiting impatiently for him.

"It is all over," said he, as he sat down, and covered his face with his hands. "The martyr has received his crown. God have mercy on us who are of the new faith!"

"And we are in danger from the commendator, Blackburn," replied old Riddlestain. "He has taken the lands of Falconcleugh; and he will not be contented till he get Riddlestain also. Where is the martyr's treatise on the saving efficacy of faith? You took it with you to-day to St Andrew's."

"Here, here," replied Henry, as he searched his bosom for the brochure. "No, no—it is gone!" he continued, as he rose and looked wildly around him. "I was reading it by the wayside; and, overcome with fatigue and suffering, I reclined, and slept—and now I find the book is gone. What may come of this, when our enemies are ranging the land with the fiery faggot?"

"Saw you no one by the way?" said the father.

"Only Carey, the wandering beadsman of Pittenweem," replied the son.

"Seek him—seek him, ere you sleep, Henry! Our lives depend on your recovering that book, which they call heretical, because it shews us the true way to that place where priests have no power. But the way it leads is through earthly flames; and we are not yet so well prepared for that ordeal as he who passed to-day."

The young man flew out of the house; and, taking his way again past Falconcleugh, without stopping to know more certainly the fate of the inhabitant of the quarry, he was hurrying on in the direction which he supposed had been taken by the bluegown, when he heard a noise, as if of the opening of a door of the old mansion. The sound startled him; and he returned and placed himself in the shade of the walls. In a few minutes, he saw the old beadsman, who he thought had betaken himself to his quarters at Pittenweem, come forth, in the company of a young woman rolled up in a cloak. They hurried onwards, as if afraid of discovery; and Henry, following them, traced them to the small cottage of Mossfell, about a quarter of a mile distant from Falconcleugh.

"My own Margaret again at Falconcleugh at a late hour," muttered the youth to himself, as he saw the young woman part with the bluegown, and betake herself to the cottage, while Carey proceeded on his way to Pittenweem. The youth allowed him to continue his course until he came to the spot where he had been reading the book. He then made up to him.

"Thus far only on your way, Carey?" said he, as he overtook him.

"Nae farther, Master Henry," was the reply, accompanied by a scrutinizing twinkle of the beadsman's eye, as if to ascertain whether the questioner had noticed his proceedings. "But what has brought you again frae Riddlestain, at this late hour?"

"It is not to ask you what I know you will not tell me, Carey—the secret of Mansie of the Quarryheugh, and whether he be now in the bottom of the waters. I am myself in danger; and would know if you met any one on the road to-night, ere you came up to me?"

As he spoke, he proceeded to search for the heretical tract.

"So it was you," said the beadsman, "from whom, when sleepin by the roadside, was taen the written heresy that Blackburn's clerk, Geordie Dempster, was busy reading to his fellow-traveller, John o' the Priory, in Dame M'Gills, at the Haughfoot. The body o' young Riddlestain will be a cinder ere the sun has gane twelve times owre the East Neuk. If the commendator got Melville o' Falconcleugh burned in France, will he, think ye, hae ony great difficulty in getting Henry Leslie burned in Scotland?"

"Your words carry fire in them, Carey; but I have not said that the book was mine."

"There's nae occasion for the admission," replied the bluegown, "especially to ane wha lives by the auld kirk, and maybe ought, even now, to turn his face to St Andrew's, to evidence against you. You may be safe at Riddlestain for this night, but scarcely owre the morn. I will gie ye warnin, if ye will trust me."

"I will," replied Henry.

And the bluegown, waving his wand, continued on his journey, while the young man turned his steps, in fear, towards home. He again came to the cottage of Mossfell, and stood before the door. Margaret Bethune resided there, under the protection of old Dame Craigie. She was reputed an orphan; and, as such, she had secured the interest of the family at Riddlestain. By other claims, she had secured the affection of the son; and never, until this night, had he observed in her conduct aught that excited any other feeling than love and respect, nor had what he had witnessed, in any material degree, altered the opinion he had formed of her. Yet, what object had she to serve by visiting the dark chambers of Falconcleugh with a wandering bluegown, at so late an hour of the night. He had heard, from the servants at Riddlestain, that she had been seen stealing from the old mansion at late hours; but she had uniformly avoided his inquiries for information. On this occasion, she might have gone to inquire as to the fate of Mansie, who had, apparently, been plunged into the waters. Yet why did the beadsman avoid the subject, and not offer satisfaction on a matter of importance to any one possessed of a spark of humanity? The danger of his own situation did not prevent him from indulging in these thoughts; and, as he stood and listened, he ascertained that the inmates had not gone to bed.

"I will see," he muttered, "whether Margaret and her old friend observe the same silence."

And he rapped at the door. He got admittance; and, seating himself by the fire—

"I am disturbed," he said. "As I returned this night from the scene of the death of my friend, I stood, with old Carey the beadsman, over the quarry of Falconcleugh, watching the motions of the old cripple who lives in that strange place. We heard a plash in the waters, and saw no more of him. Is it possible that he is drowned; and I, confused by selfish fears for my own safety, neglected to rouse my father's servants to make search for a fellow-creature?"

He watched the countenance of Margaret as he spoke and finished. There was no trace there of the effects of a sensibility which usually responded to the minutest detail of suffering. He waited for her explanation of the object of her own visit to the quarry, but none was forthcoming.

"Ye needna fear for auld Mansie," said the dame. "If every plash o' a loose stane o' the auld wa's—ay, or a heugh-bane o' the auld Melvilles, or broken branch in the waters o' the quarry—were a sign o' his death, twenty times has he dreed the doom."

"You spoke of your own danger, Henry," said Margaret, retreating from the subject. "Is it from the persecutors of our secret, holy faith, who have this day burned Hamilton at St Andrew's?"

"It is—it is, Margaret," rejoined the youth, as he rose, dissatisfied at what he supposed a trait of disengenuousness or secret mystery. "I may be compelled to leave Scotland, if I would not follow my friend through the flames. But old Carey, the beadsman, or Mansie, the cripple, may console you in my absence." And, with these words, he hastened to the door.

"What mean you, Henry?" said the girl, as she hastened after him, and stopped him, by seizing tremblingly his hand.

"Lovers have no secrets, Margaret," replied he. "You

might have told me at once that you and the beadsman were at Falconcleugh. Why, if it was nothing more but a compliance with the dictates of humanity, to see whether or not, as we suspected, a fellow-creature had fallen into the basin, where was the reason for secrecy? I am now satisfied the Droich is safe. He is nothing to me more than to others, who stand, and stare, and wonder at so strange a being in so strange a place; but a straw in the wind may tell us the direction of the argosy, and by this I may convict you of a want of ingenuousness. To-morrow I may be in flight for my life, in these fearful times, when the faggot surrounds the altar of the true faith; and how could I trust one with my secret who denies me satisfaction in a matter that concerns us scarcely more than it does the ordinary people of the world?"

"Who said that I was at Falconcleugh this night?" answered she. "Was it the beadsman? Tell me, Henry, am I betrayed by one of whom neither you nor I can deserve better? for he eats the unholy fruits of the faith he pretends to disown."

"No; Carey is as secret as yourself," rejoined he; "and, I hope, as true to me, who am also in his power."

"Thank God!" ejaculated she; "and now, Henry, if you love me, no more of Falconcleugh or its maimed inhabitant. Will you promise?"

"You put me to an unfair test, Margaret. I will reply to you in the same spirit. Will you, if I am forced to fly my country, accompany me as my wife?"

"I cannot," replied she. "There is one here who claims the sacrifice to my first love."

"Man or woman?" inquired he.

"I cannot answer more," said she. "The time is not come. When it is decreed that the fire shall no longer burn on the street of St Andrew's, you shall know all. Meanwhile, fly, if flight will save you; and take with you the pledge, that I am yours, in heart and spirit, in all that belongs to true affection."

"So be it," he replied, hurriedly, and with a look of dissatisfaction. "Farewell! and it may be for ever."

With these words, he left the cottage, and hurrying to Riddlestain, gave an account of the dangerous situation in which he was placed. His father saw the peril with perhaps a keener perception of the probable consequences. The act of 1525, against heretics, was in full force, and the church authorities eked out its sanctions by wrested texts of Scripture, with an ingenuity and thirst of blood that threatened destruction to all heretics. It was resolved that Henry should be regulated by the warnings of the beadsman, whose sources of information would enable him to save the son of his old friend from ruin if not death. The night was passed by the inmates of Riddlestain with fearful forebodings; and next morning, and during a part of the day, Henry expected a secret visit from the beadsman. As the evening approached, he ventured forth to look for the bearer of intelligence, but as yet he was not visible. The moon had risen, and was again flinging her beams over the muir of Falconcleugh, and the old mansion of the Melvilles stood in solemn darkness in the midst of the scene. Again he was occupied by the thoughts suggested by what he had seen on the previous night, and what he had heard from Carey and Margaret; yet, all his attempts to unravel their conduct and converse was unavailing, and he felt half inclined to seek again the cottage at Mossfell, to put the maiden to another test, while he would ease her mind of the reflections which the abrupt if not cruel terms of his departure would inevitably suggest. In the midst of his reverie he was startled by a noise; and, on looking round, he saw the dark figure of the inhabitant of the Quarryheugh coming along by his peculiar springing movement. He had never before seen him beyond the precincts of the hollow where he had taken up his residence; and felt as he might have felt on the approach of some being from another world. Every now and then the creature stopped, and beckoned him forwards, but Henry retained his position as if transfixed to the ground, and, in a short time, the hermit was by his side, with his face—which was covered with long hair, and the features almost obliterated by scars—turned up to him in the full light of the moon.

"The fires of other lands," said he, "are as scorching as those of the Scotch faggot. Thou wouldst yet fly to them, and leave the commendator, Blackburn, to seize Riddlestain, while thy father suffers the fate thou wouldst avoid."

"Let him remain," replied Henry, "who has faith and fortitude to pass through the fiery ordeal. You did not, good Mansie, see Hamilton's blackened body sink among the blazing faggots."

A half-suppressed groan rumbled in the throat of the Droich.

"What I have seen—what I have felt, thou mayst never know," said he. "But see, there are the church emissaries already after thee."

Henry looked round, and saw some horsemen scouring along the muir, at a considerable distance, in the direction of Riddlestain. Throwing himself down on the heath to avoid being seen, he remained in that position for a few minutes, and by the time he again lifted his head, his Mentor was a considerable distance from him, working his progress forwards, on his hands and knees, with great effort. The next moment a hand was on his shoulder, and he shuddered with terror.

"I'm maybe owre late," said the beadsman. "Quick, quick!—Blackburn and his hounds are awa to Riddlestain, wi' a warrant to apprehend you."

Henry followed the beadsman, who hurried on towards Falconcleugh.

"Now for your choice," said he. "Auld Mansie was giein ye counsel, maybe, to stay and stand your doom. What say ye, flight or flaught, an exile or an eizel?"

"I am unresolved," replied the youth.

"And, by the faith o' the auld kirk, ye hae muckle time to ponder. See!—see! the blood-hounds have changed their course, their scent lies this way."

"I am lost!" ejaculated the young man.

"It maun be!—it maun be!" responded the beadsman, as he stood by the dark walls of Falconcleugh mansion, and seemed to hesitate. "There's nae ither mean. Here here," he continued, as he descended some steps, and taking Henry by the arm, hurried him down, and then applied a key to a low door of the mansion, which he opened.

"There, there," he muttered, as he pushed the youth into a dark chamber. "I will turn their muzzles to the south."

The door was shut, and Henry, immediately after, heard the loud call of some horsemen, inquiring of the beadsman whether he had not with him a companion.

"Beggars hae short acquaintanceships," replied the bluegown. The word, awmous, severs good company. Wha are ye after, wi' the loose rein and the bloody spur?"

"Henry Leslie, younger of Riddlestain," replied one of the men. "Whither has he gone?"

"My een lack now their former licht," replied the beadsman; "but if ye, wha are younger, look weel to the east, ye'll see something yonder, thicker, I ween, than a munebeam. Ye ken what I mean. Ane wha has got an awmous frae his father canna speak plainer, even to the friends o' the auld kirk."

"Well said, old Carey," cried the men, as they set forth, with redoubled speed, in the direction pointed out by the beggar."

Now, left to himself in a dark chamber of the old mansion of the Melvilles, Henry began to look round him for some place, where, in the event of a search being there

made for him, he might, with greater chance of success, elude their efforts. Mounting up a few steps, he reached a recess in the wall, which had once been enclosed by a door, the hinges of which still adhered to the stones, and there he crouched, under the gloom of an anxiety that pictured in the future the images of the various forms of persecution to which the heretics of the time were exposed. There was scarcely any light in the chamber. The flapping of the wings of bats, that had been adhering, in a state of torpor, to the roof, was the only sound that met his ear. A noisome damp pervaded the atmosphere; and a creeping sensation ran over his flesh, which, co-operating with his fear and solitude, made him shiver. For two hours he heard no indications of any one approaching the building; he began to think of removing while, now being dark, he could escape to some greater distance from his enemies; yet he deemed it a dubious measure, while the absence of the beadsman augured danger from without. All was again still, the bats had again betaken themselves to the walls and the roof, and the sound of a cricket might have been heard throughout the extent of the dreary chamber. At length, the grating sound of the hinges of a door startled him, and he stretched forth his head to watch the movement. The door opened, and a young woman, rolled up in a cloak, cautiously entered, taking from under her mantle a lantern, which she waved round and round, as if to ascertain that there was no one within. She then closed the door, and, proceeding to the side of the chamber next the quarry, made some audible knocks upon the side of an opening, somewhat of the form of a window, through which only a faint gleam of light had been able to struggle. This done, she sat down on the floor, and sighed heavily, muttering broken sentences in which the name of him who witnessed her strange proceedings could be distinguished. After a few minutes, the trees of the Quarryheugh, agitated by some living impulse, gave forth a rustling sound which, in the prevailing silence of the still night, reached the interior, and was observed by the listener. The movement continued, until the figure of the stunted inhabitant of the quarry appeared at the aperture, and, by two or three convulsive efforts, he flung himself into the apartment. The light from the lamp fell upon the couple. The girl still sat on the floor, and her companion reclined by her side, throwing out his maimed limbs, and turning up his face—which might have been fraught with terror to another—in the countenance of her who seemed to regard him with demonstrations of affection.

"Blackburn, the old enemy of our house, is forth again," said he; "and young Riddlestain may fall. Are you prepared?"

"It is to be hoped he will fly, father, and be yet saved to me," answered she, sorrowfully, while she took some edibles from a small corbin and placed them before him; then drawing her hand over her eyes—"When is this wo and watching to cease?—when may I own my kindred, my love, and my faith?"

"Weep not—weep not," said the other; "or let it be up in the chamber of thy mother, whither I nightly drag those maimed and scorched limbs, that the heart which burns for vengeance on the enemies of the Melvilles may be quenched with the tribute of a love that mourns the dead. She cured these fragments of members when rescued from the stake, that I might come back to my country, a wreck whom none may recognise and all may scorn, but a daughter who must yet pity while she loves."

"Would that my love and my pity might be known," replied she. "How often have I asked permission to proceed to the court, to plead on my bended knees for relief to one who has already suffered what might expiate a housand heresies—ay, more than death."

"While the commendator lives, it is vain, Margaret. I have waited for him long, to shew him, in the mansion of my fathers, what his power has achieved—ha! ha! I would do him homage as the holder of a pendicle of the lands he has wrested from me—even the Quarryheugh. It is my duty. These arms, which the fires spared, might yet let him feel the strength of a vassal who has no power to follow him to the wars against the faithful."

"You fear me, father!" ejaculated the girl, as she bent over him, while he murmured, in growling accents, his threats. "The commendator is a man of power, and may get finished what his agents so wofully left undone in your exile."

"Power," groaned the other—"power, when alone in this dark chamber with me, to whom yet is left these arms!"

"Heaven keep him long away!" replied Margaret; "for your strength is a by word to the creatures who gaze at you till they fly in fear from one they deem supernatural. Hush—a door has opened above."

"Hie thee to Mossfell—quick—quick, child."

"O remember that you have a daughter!" ejaculated she, as she retreated.

"And that I had a wife whom my wrongs killed—yea, that I had once the face and form of a man!" he added, as he flung the fragments of victuals out of the window, and then swung himself out by the immense strength of his arms.

The sound from above, which had thus startled the father and daughter, now chained the ear of Leslie, whose curiosity had been roused and gratified by the strange scene he had witnessed. Footsteps now sounded overhead; and, by and by, the tread was heard on the inside stairs leading to the lower apartment. At the same moment, the door from which Margaret had issued, opened quickly, and the head of another individual was presented. It was too dark for Leslie to ascertain who it was; but the words "Escape—fly," repeated hurriedly, satisfied him that it was the beadsman who was thus making an effort to save him. It was too late; the sound on the stairs indicated a near approach, and Leslie behoved to run the risk of being captured where he was, rather than make an effort to escape which would be too clearly ineffectual. Several individuals now entered from the stair; and, by their statements, Leslie could perceive that they were in search of him.

"The bird, if ever here caged, has flown," cried one, as he approached the door and found it open.

"Then he cannot be far off," said another. "After him, and I shall wait here that you may report progress."

Several of the company immediately rushed to the door.

"Leave the light, Dempster," cried the voice of the last, and a man took from his cloak and placed on the floor a lantern. They were in an instant gone, and he who was left began to pace along the dark room. He was closely muffled up to the chin; and, as he continued to walk backwards and forwards, he occasionally seized the folds of his riding cloak, and wrapt them round him, ejaculating broken statements as his thoughts and feelings rose on the suggestion of his situation and pursuits.

"I shall get Riddlestain for my pains," said he; "ay, even as I have got Falconcleugh. The Church is a kind mother to her children; yet, has not this gift been as yet useless to me? Why? Down, down rebellious answer of a coward heart—I am not afraid to occupy the house of him who expired in the flames by the condemnation which I accomplished. Now is the test. The bones of the Melvilles lie white in the Quarryheugh. I am alone in their old residence, and tremble not."

And, as he argued against his fears, he quickened his step, listening, at intervals, for sounds from without. Not altogether satisfied that he was alone, he took the lantern

and held it up so that the light might penetrate into the corners of the chamber.

"All is still, lonely, and dreary," said he again, as he approached the north wall, and placed his head in the aperture. He started. There was a face there such as man might not look on and be not afraid. The lantern fell from his hands, and lay on the floor unextinguished. Receding backwards, and still keeping his eye on the object, he sought the low door on the west, and, finding it locked, betook himself to the stair, up which he flew with a rapidity corresponding to his fears; but it was only to descend again in greater difficulty, after he essayed an exit in that direction in vain, against a door also locked.

"Ho! the Droich!" at length he exclaimed, as if suddenly recollecting himself, and affecting a composure well enough suited, probably, to his discovery, yet scarcely authorized by his finding himself a prisoner.

At the moment of his exclamation, the cripple bounded on the floor, and stood before him on his knees with his arms folded, and his scorched face reflecting the glimmer of the lantern that lay before him emitting a weak light.

"Gilbert Blackburn," sounded in deep accents through the chamber. The commendator recoiled and recovered himself.

"Mansie, so do the people call you," said he, affecting conciliation, "you are but an uncourteous vassal—taking up your habitation on another's lands without leave, and startling your overlord by the humour of your jesture, while you should be paying his ground-fees."

"Mayhap, your Honour," replied the cripple, "may remit these on behalf of my misfortunes. See you these limbs, and this countenance? I will shew you them by the light of this lamp. Come closer to me. They say I am frightful to behold—Psha! Art thou afraid of a living man?—and yet, thou didst now vaunt of thy courage, till thou didst even say that the spirits of the Melvilles would not terrify thee. Come closer to me, Gilbert Blackburn, and see if thou canst recognise in these features—horrid though they be—aught of the traces of one whom thou didst once think so well of that thou didst envy his lands of Falconcleugh."

"What! are you man or monster?" cried the commendator, as he receded before the progressive movements of his enemy.

"Both species are here," rejoined Melville; "I am a man, though liker the other denomination. They called me George Melville, when I bore another shape, and I was of Falconcleugh. By that name I once lived happy in this mansion—blessed with love and the reward of good offices. By that name too, I worshipped God, by the light of reason; and by that name, was burned at the stake, till pity relieved me, and amputation saved the wreck that was not worth saving. Art thou not satisfied? Search these features. All is not gone. Enough of evidence there may yet be found to justify my claim for a remission of my ground-dues of the Quarryheugh."

As he spoke, his countenance exhibited, in the midst of its deformity, the traces of a fury that was only for a few minutes kept in abeyance by the offering of bitter satire. The commendator, overcome by fear, and consciousness of a cruel and heartless purpose, kept receding; while Melville, sure of his prey, and eyeing him with remorseless hatred, approached him by a series of leaps and contortions, more after the manner of an enraged and maimed beast of prey, than that of a human being. The fame of his strength had gone forth with that of his other singular attributes; and probably, even if Blackburn had been gifted with ordinary courage, he would have quailed before the approach of the extraordinary being. Fear, however, had taken possession of a mind devoid of all courage, and he flew round the chamber, imploring that mercy which he had never shewn to others. Leslie, who witnessed the extraordinary scene, meditated an interference, but he quelled the thought from a sense of his own danger, and continued through the gloom to mark the conduct of the parties. The pursuit was short. Blackburn, finding himself pressed towards an angle, attempted feebly to use his sword. It was seized and snapped asunder, and, next instant, he was down in the iron grasp of his ruthless foe—writhing in the agony of fear, as he felt himself drawn towards the window that overlooked the chasm of the quarry. Twice the energies of an ordinary man of courage might not have resisted the cripple; and, though the struggles of despair sometimes transcend all calculation of supposed strength, they were too apparently, in this instance, unavailing. Two or three gigantic efforts, and the commendator was on the brink of the descent—his back to the chasm, his face to that of his intended destroyer. The light of the lamp served to shew Leslie the countenance of the victim, and a part of that of Melville; and he shuddered at the fearful expression of agony on the one part, and vengeance on the other. Not a word was spoken; but the chamber was filled with deep-drawn respirations. A faint scream burst from the commendator; and down, down he went into the chasm of dark waters. Melville drew a deep breath, as if he once again enjoyed the free use of his lungs, remained silent for a few minutes, and then deliberately issued from the aperture, by the mode he had been in the habit of following, and which, to him, was attended with no danger.

Leslie was terror-struck. His first thoughts concerned his own position. Found there, he would be reputed the murderer of the commendator; and he hastened down to betake himself to flight. The doors defied his efforts; and he put his head out at the window, only to withdraw it with a shudder of horror. In a few minutes, the door was opened by the beadsman.

"Ye'll be as weel oot here, I'm thinkin, Master Henry," sai he.

"Know you what has been done, Carey?" cried Henry.

"I ken that baith you and I are owre lang here," replied the beadsman, as he hurried out.

In a few minutes, the muir was clear. The two took different directions; nor was Henry Leslie heard of again for a period of two years. During this interval, an investigation was made into the circumstances attending the murder of Blackburn. There was no evidence brought home to Melville; and the opinion prevailed that the commendator had fallen accidentally into the chasm. Melville, meanwhile, withdrew himself again to the Continent, where he died. The property was again restored to Margaret, in consideration of the injuries sustained by her parents. The death of Hamilton produced, throughout Scotland, so great an effect, that the prosecutions for heresy were, for a time, suspended; and Leslie returned to his native country. From the circumstance of Falconcleugh and Riddlestain being afterwards in the family of the Leslies, we may augur something of a union between the two lovers of our story. We merely, however, throw out this as a conjecture—our attention having been chiefly directed to the more important parts of the strange legend we have now given, which certainly does not exceed credibility.

WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE JACOBITE.

It is now many a long year since the old Laird of Stonielands was gathered to his fathers—since all the peculiarities, eccentricities, hopes, fears, joys, and sorrows of that worthy personage were buried in the grave with the body which they once animated.

Mr Dundonald was of an ancient and respectable family in the south of Scotland, but was the last lineal descendant of the race from which he sprung; and, as he died unmarried and childless, his death presented the first interruption to that even current of patrimonial inheritance which had borne the estate of Stonielands through the hands of his progenitors since the days of Robert Bruce.

In person, the laird was tall and thin; his countenance, grave and intelligent; and his manner that of a gentleman of the old school—full of ceremonious dignity, and punctilious politeness. Mr Dundonald, who, as we have already said, was never married, kept bachelor's hall at the period of our story, viz., the year 1745, at the family mansion-house of Stonielands. Here he had resided during the whole of his life, with the exception of a short period—about a year and a-half—which he had spent, in his youth, in foreign travel, as was then the custom with young men of fortune and family.

The laird's household consisted only of himself, a housekeeper, two or three female servants, and a fac-totum, of the name of Archibald Muirhead. This worthy personage—who had been born and bred on Mr Dundonald's estate, and who had been that gentleman's companion in boyhood—conjoined in his own person the various offices of butler, coachman, footman, and adviser. He had been thirty years in the family, had been abroad with his young master, when both himself and the latter *were* young; and had acquired, at the time we speak of him, partly through his long and faithful services, and partly through a certain blunt free-and-easy manner, which was natural to him, an ascendancy and influence in Mr Dundonald's household, which was at least equal to that of his master's. To that master, Archy was a dutiful and conscientious servant, and a sincere though humble friend; although but little of this could be discovered, at least by a stranger, in the personal intercourse of the two. That intercourse was marked by a number of singularities—not the least remarkable of which was an appearance of perfect equality between the master and the man; a total absence of all outward deference on the one side, and of all assumption of superiority on the other. They, moreover, quarrelled ten times at least every day, and as often made it up again. Mr Dundonald, although esteeming Archy for his fidelity, his attachment to himself, which was very great, and for several other good qualities he possessed besides, entertained the most profound contempt for his judgment; and, to say truth, it was certainly none of the brightest. Archy, on the other hand, although esteeming his master beyond all other human beings, although loving him with all his heart and soul, had by no means entire faith in the soundness and propriety of all his master's sentiments and predilections. There were some of these on which they differed very materially, but none on which they were so directly and determinedly opposed as on those of a political nature, particularly in all that bore reference to the pretensions of Charles Stuart to the British throne—a subject which was, at the period of which we speak, beginning to excite an intense interest in Scotland, in consequence of well accredited rumours of an intention on the part of the Prince to visit Scotland, supported by an armed force, with the view of asserting his birthright, and of fighting his way to the throne of his ancestors. At the precise juncture to which we refer, these mighty designs were yet but matter of report. It was not for some time after that they were realized to the extent detailed in that romantic portion of our national history.

Mr Dundonald, then, was a Jacobite. He was; and one of the most enthusiastic, the most devoted that ever attached himself to the unfortunate cause whence the term has arisen. With him it was a master passion, an engrossing sentiment; one that absorbed all others, and discovered itself in a thousand shapes, and by the most extravagant manifestations. It had no bounds, no limits, and was under none of that control arising from considerations of time, place, or circumstance; it was, in short, outrageous.

In this devotion to the house of Stuart, Mr Dundonald met with but little sympathy from his humble friend, Archy, who took no interest whatever in the great question about to be brought to issue; he cared not a farthing who was king, provided his own peace and quiet were not disturbed by, or in any way dependant on, the possessor of the throne.

We have said that Archy took no interest in the impending crisis. This, however, is not exactly what we meant to express. He *did* take an interest in it, in so far as to entertain a cordial dislike of the threatened attempt, on account of the trouble and risk into which, he feared, it would involve his master, who, he had no doubt, would connect himself in some way or other with the desperate undertaking.

Under the influence of this fear, he took every opportunity of expressing his abhorrence of the Prince and his cause, and of checking his master's outrageous bursts of enthusiasm in his behalf. This interference on the part of Archy, with his opinions and their expression, Mr Dundonald bore with the most perfect good temper; attributing it, justly, to the latter's concern for his interest and welfare.

It was while matters were in this state—that is, the country in a fever of excitation, and Archy fretted out of all temper by his master's avowed predilection for the cause which had given rise to this universal perturbation of feeling—that the latter hurried, one forenoon, into the garden where his fac-totum was busily employed in hoeing some young cabbage, and, with triumph in his look, and high excitation in his manner, exclaimed—

"What say ye to it now, Archy? You always maintained that the Prince would never attempt to land in this country; that he dared not. Now, he *has* landed!—he has landed!" shouted the laird in a key so suddenly elevated as to resemble a shriek. "He has landed—Hurra! hurra!"

And he brandished his stick with as much vigour and science as if it had been a veritable André Ferrara.

"Weel, if he has landed," replied Archy, with perfect deliberation and gravity, "I sincerely hope it's in the dirt. That's a' I say."

"No, Archy; he has landed on a rock—a rock of adamant. His footing is sure and firm; no slipping nor sliding; rocks beneath him, rocks around him—emblems of the strength of his cause, and of the brave hearts by which it is to be supported. Charlie will be King of England yet!" And the laird again flourished his stick high in the air.

"Dear me, man," said Archy, with the same composure as before, "but I do wonder to hear a sensible man like you bletherin awa at this fearfu rate. I trust, however, ye hae still sense aneuch left to keep your head oot o' the helter; and no to be blazenin yer nonsense through the hail country, to let everybody ken what an auld fule ye are."

"Archy, you're an ass," replied his master, in great irritation—"a downright ass; a stupid, insolent, incorrigible, unmitigated, irremediable, brainless idiot; not a spark of soul in you; no enthusiasm; no patriotism; no sentiment; a clod of the valley; a concentration of all that is dull, sordid, selfish, and grovelling."

"Ay, ay, gang on—gang on," replied Archy. "My word, there's a bonny string o' names to ca' ony Christian beein. Are ye no ashamed o' yoursel? But tak yer ain way o't, as I fancy ye wull, for a' that I can say to ye. He that wull to Cupar maun to Cupar. Gang on, in Gude's name! Get yer hurdies into a kilt, and a claymore in yer fist, and commence the trade o' throat-cuttin, in behalf o' yer lawfu Prince; that's what ye ca' pawtriotism, I fancy. Do this, and ye'll see what'll be the end o't. Before sax months gae aboot, ye'll be swingin on a wuddie, wi' half-a-dizen bare-breeched vagabonds on ilka side o' ye; yer hoose herried o' every stick that's in't; and yer cornfields dealt awa, like a pack o' cards, amang the winners. That's what ye'll mak o't, if ye tak ony hand in this cursed, idiotical business."

"Archy," replied Mr Dundonald, with earnest, didactive gravity, and planting the end of his stick emphatically on the ground as he spoke—"Archy, I repeat that ye are an ass—a stupid ass. No more heart or soul than one of these cabbages you are hoeing. I'll do as I please in this matter, you cursed idiot. So mind your own affairs, and leave me to manage mine."

Having thus delivered himself, the laird turned about on his heel, and left Archy to his own reflections on the subject which they had just been discussing. On the laird's departure—

"There ye go, for an auld fule; the biggest, I think, without ony exception, this day in Great Britain, or ony whar else, for aught I ken," said Archy, looking after his retiring master with an expression of conscious superiority, on the scores of wisdom and prudence, as they bore reference to the matter which had just been debated between them.

It was some weeks after the occurrence just related—and during which Archy and his master had made their peace, not only on the quarrel above detailed, but on at least fifty others, that had arisen and disappeared in the same space of time—that Mr Dundonald announced to his *fidus Achates* that business required his presence in Edinburgh for a few days. The laird did not impart with this intimation any very distinct information as to the nature of the business that required his absence, but seemed to desire that what he did say on the subject should lead Archy to believe that it was the settlement of some law affairs connected with his property—a description of business which had frequently taken him to the capital before.

There was something, however, in Mr Dundonald's manner on this occasion, and in the obscurity of the way in which he spoke of his intended journey, that excited certain suspicions in Archy's bosom as to its real purpose. These suspicions, however, did not present themselves very forcibly to Archy's mind for several days after his master's departure, nor until they were roused by the very long period of Mr Dundonald's absence. He had never, on any occasion before, been more than two days at a time in Edinburgh: he was now absent nearly a week. Another week elapsed, and still Mr Dundonald did not return, nor did Archy hear anything from or of him.

"Nae word o' the laird yet, Mysie," he said to the housekeeper, one morning at breakfast, about ten days after Mr Dundonald's departure. "It's queer. I never kent him stay sae lang afore."

"Some business will have detained him," replied the elderly spinster, as she poured out Archy's second cup of tea.

"Ay, I fancy sae," said Archy; "but it's a business, I doot, that baith you and me 'll find the frost o', Mysie; and himsel too, puir, foolish, misguided man."

"What do ye mean, Archy?" exclaimed the alarmed spinstress, pausing in her table duties, with the uplifted cream-pot in her hand. "What hae we to do wi' oor maister's business?"

"Naething," replied Archy; "but our master's business may hae to do wi' us, my leddy; and, feth! I doot baith you and me 'll find that ere a great length o' time goes about. The short and the lang o't is, Mysie—although dinna ye mention it to a leevin soul, as ye wad keep a house abune yer head, and as ye value the quiet, canny, comfortable life ye lead here—I'm sair misdoubtin our puir, thochtless maister has joined thae infernal rebels that are kickin up sic a huroosh in the country enow. I'm feared for't. I'm mair than feared—I'm sure o't."

"And what hae we to do wi' that, Archy? Let him please himsel," simply replied the very simple housekeeper.

"What hae we to do wi't! Let him please himsel!" repeated Archy, impatiently. "Dear me, woman, is that a' the sense and knowledge ye hae? Haena we to do wi't, think ye, if it costs us our bread, as it will do to a certainty? The business is treason, woman—high treason. Hangin, headin, quarterin, and confiscation o' a' gudes, gear, chattels, particles, and pendicles."

A sudden scream of horror from the now enlightened housekeeper here interrupted, for a moment, Archy's enumeration of the entertaining items that make the sum total of a traitor's punishment.

"Yes, Mysie," he went on, gratified with the proof he had just had of the effect of his disclosures, "hangin, headin, quarterin, disbowelin, and ither fearfu hackins and hewins, wi' confiscation o' a' particles, pendicles, in-fields and out-fields, and a' the fields that's o' them, is the sentence o' the law anent cases o' high treason; and this that our puir, thochtless maister has embarked in is just as desperate a bad ane as ever ony unfortunate idowit had to do wi'."

"But, dear me, Archy," said the housekeeper, "you that has sae muckle to say wi' Mr Dundonald, could ye no advise wi' him, and prevent him middlin wi' the rebels."

"That's no sae easy dune as ye think, Mysie. He's as obstinate as a mule. I hae lang fought wi' him about this business; but to little purpose. Howsomever, I'll try it yet once again; but we maun first ascertain the fact before we tak ony decisive steps in the matter. I'll write this very day to Mr Ramsay, the vriter, Mr Dundonald's man of business, in Edinburgh, to inquire if he kens onything about him, or has ony notion o' what he's about."

Having come to this determination, Archy forthwith re-

tired to his own apartment, and, in the course of some three or four hours, produced the following specimen of letter writing :—

"Sir,—Mr Dundonald left this about fourteen days since, and I don't no where his gone to, and I would like to no, for he never use to be so long from home before.

"I fear some mischief in thae times, but don't no. Will you be so good as let me no imedatly if he has been with you, for he said he was going to you to settle some business; but I doot this. Please let me no imedatly, if you no anything about him, and, believe me, yours to comman, Archibald Muirhead."

Having read and re-read this very elegant and lucid epistle somewhere about a dozen times, and made some very important corrections in the orthography, Archy folded it up, sealed it with a bit of chewed bread, and addressed it to "Mr James Ramsay, vriter, Cannigate—opposite the head o' Deacon Wilkie's Close—Edinburgh."

This done, he forthwith conveyed the letter in question to the quarters of the carrier, in the neighbouring village of Mainfield; and, luckily finding that person just on the eve of his departure for the capital, put it into his hands to be conveyed to its destination.

For two days, Archy impatiently awaited the answer of his correspondent. On the third it came. It was brief, and to the following purpose :—

"Archibald Muirhead, I have received your letter, and note its contents.

"Mr Dundonald *did* call upon me some ten days since; I had only one visit from him, and have not seen him since. I cannot tell where he is, but participate in your fears, which I perfectly understand.

"James Ramsay."

"It's just as I feared!" said Archy, on having read this communication, which he fully made out in something less than an hour. "It's just as I feared. He's awa wi' thae infernal rebels. Aff birr on the high road to hanging."

Having arrived at this alarming conviction, Archy instantly came to a new and bold resolution. This was, to set off directly in quest of his master for the purpose, if he found him, of endeavouring to prevail upon him, even yet, to abandon the desperate enterprise in which he had no doubt he was now engaged.

Part of Archy's plan, on this occasion, was to proceed first to Edinburgh to seek an interview with Mr Ramsay, to consult that gentleman with regard to his future proceedings, and thereafter to act as circumstances might direct.

Acting on this resolution, Archy set off on the following day for Edinburgh, and, in a few minutes after his arrival in that city, was in the presence of the worthy law-agent of his master.

When Archy entered Mr Ramsay's office, that gentleman was busily engaged writing at a desk in the midst of half-a-dozen clerks; but on seeing his visiter, whom he knew personally, having frequently seen him at Stonielands, he instantly came forward towards him, and, placing his forefinger on his mouth, as a signal for Archy not to open his business where they then were, conducted him into an adjoining apartment. When he had done so, and had carefully closed the door behind him—

"Well, Archibald, my friend," he said, "any word of the laird yet?"

"No a cheep!" replied Archy. 'I'm dootin he's awa to join thae heather-bleaters."

"Indeed, from what I know of his political sentiments," said Mr Ramsay in a low tone, "I must say I much fear it, Archibald. It is a thousand pities; for I do not think that this affair of the Prince's can possibly end well, whatever may be the temporary success of those engaged in it."

"That's just precisely my ain opinion, Mr Ramsay," said Archy. "They're sure a' to licht in the dirt at last. Ken ye whar the rebels are enow, Mr Ramsay?"

"They're at Perth, I understand," replied the latter.

"So I heard. Weel, then, ye see, I'm determined, and am sae far on my way, to make ae ither attempt to diswad my unfortunate maister frae this unhappy business. Noo, as he's an obstanate man, as ye ken weel, Mr Ramsay, and 'll no listen to ony gude advice that *I* can gie him, wad ye juist be sae gude as gie me a bit line frae yoursel like, advisin him to submit to my guidance, and to listen to reason."

"No objection whatever, Archy—no objection at all,' replied Mr Ramsay, "to go that far, and farther if it should be required, in seconding your laudable efforts to dissuade Mr Dundonald from proceeding farther in this dangerous, and, I must think it, hopeless affair."

Having said this, Mr Ramsay seated himself at a writing table that was in the apartment, and forthwith indited a letter to his friend and employer, Mr Dundonald.

This letter was not precisely in the terms Archy had desired, for it did not enjoin the former to put himself under the guidance of the latter; but it contained many earnest entreaties that he would abandon the enterprise in which he was engaged. Without seeking to know its exact contents, Archy now carefully deposited the letter in his side-pocket, and shortly after took his leave of the writer, who, shaking him cordially by the hand, wished him success in his friendly mission.

On the following day, Archy, mounted on a nag, which he had hired for the purpose—there being then no stage coaches—started for the "fair city."

On arriving in the immediate vicinity of Perth, which he did on the forenoon of the following day, the first object of particular interest that struck him, was a large body of armed men at drill on the South Inch. These, Archy had no doubt, were the insurgents; and a nearer approach gave him such evidence as assured him of the fact.

This evidence consisted chiefly in an immense display of tartan, and in the screaming of some scores of bagpipes, placed at different points.

Satisfied that they *were* the insurgents, and thinking it highly probable that he might find his master amongst them, Archy now left the road and advanced, at a leisurely pace, towards the drilling troops.

Our traveller, however, soon discovered that, in place of being an ordinary drill, it was a great field-day with the insurgent army. In the wide circle of spectators, by which the parade or review ground was lined, were a number of well-dressed females, who kept waving their handkerchiefs, from time to time, as the troops marched past them.

In the centre of the open space, in which the Highlanders were manœuvring, stood a group of officers; and, in the centre of these, again, a tall young man, in tartan trews and scarf, to whom all, by whom he was surrounded, seemed to pay the utmost deference. It was the Prince himself; and Archy conjectured that it was so. On this personage, then, and on those by whom he was attended, Archy now looked with intense interest, although with, certainly, but little favour.

He had been thus employed for a few seconds, when another tall figure in the group, and who was dressed in the full Highland costume—kilt, bonnet, and plaid—suddenly turned his face, which had hithertoo been the reverse way, in the direction in which Archy stood. The latter caught a glimpse of it. He saw in it an outline and expression

which he thought he should know. His master! Could it be? It was. Archy felt convinced of it, and immediately rode into the area in which the troops were exercising, and pushed directly on, at a jog-trot, for the group of officers in the centre; no sense of impropriety or feeling of diffidence affecting in the least the energy and determination of his proceedings.

Archy, as he approached the group, became, in turn, an object of curiosity to the latter, who, one and all, fronted round towards him, and stood gazing on him in silent surprise, and greatly at a loss to conjecture what could be the object of his intrusion—a surprise which was not a little increased by the odd, uncouth appearance of the approaching intruder, who was mounted on a huge, hairy-heeled, cart horse, with a broad blue bonnet on his head, and a shepherd's plaid wrapped round his shoulders; a pair of course, blue, *rig-and-fur* stockings on his legs, without feet, and reaching half-way up his thighs, on the outside of his nether integuments, in the capacity of overalls: a pair of long, "siller spurs," and a huge rung, completed the equipment of the approaching horseman.

In other circumstances, the appearance of this personage would, probably, have excited merriment in the on-lookers; but these were stirring times, when very important communications might, and often were brought by very humble, and sometimes very odd messengers. These considerations suppressed, in the present instance, all feeling of levity, and led to Archy's being contemplated with perfect gravity and composure. There was one of the group, however, who viewed him with somewhat livelier feelings. This was Mr Dundonald, who at once recognised him, and that too with no little alarm and perturbation, as his friend and servitor, Archy Muirhead.

"Heavens!" exclaimed Mr Dundonald, on making the unwelcome discovery. "Heavens!" he said, rather communing with himself than addressing those around him; "what can have brought the fellow here? How on earth has he found me out?"

"Who—what is he?" exclaimed half-a-dozen voices at once.

"Indeed, gentlemen," replied Mr Dundonald, "he is no other than my servant—my fac-totum, my *fides Achates*—Archibald Muirhead—come, I hav'nt the smallest doubt, to reason with me on the folly of my conduct in being here, and to insist on my going home with him."

'Scoundrel!" muttered one or two fiercely, and instinctively clapping their hands to their dirks.

"Nay, nay, gentlemen, no scoundrel, I assure you," replied Mr Dundonald; "but a well-meaning, honest man, although he does not happen to be of our way of thinking on certain matters."

At this moment the Prince, who was a little removed from the party, suddenly turned round—having overheard, although it was not intended he should, the conversation above detailed—and asked Mr Dundonald to enlighten him a little farther as to the subject on which they were speaking. The latter immediately gave the information desired, together with a word or two descriptive of Archy's peculiarities. When he had done—

"Ah! a character, I see; a character," said the Prince, laughing, and looking towards Archy, who was now within about ten or fifteen paces of the party. "Introduce him to me, Mr Dundonald, and let me see if I cannot induce him to look on me with more friendly feelings."

"I'm afraid that will not be easy, your Highness," replied the latter; "but I shall endeavour to procure you an opportunity of attempting it."

Just as Mr Dundonald had concluded this sentence, Archy had reined in, and was, with perfect unconsciousness of its indecorum, wagging with his finger on his master to come towards him.

Mr Dundonald at once obeyed. Archy surveyed him silently for a second, as if to assure himself that it really was his master, who thus appeared before him arrayed in the detested tartan, the abominated belted plaid, and still more abhorred kilt.

"There ye are then, at last; fairly in for't; the rape about your neck," were Archy's first words of greeting, spoken with a due severity of aspect. "Did ever I think to see the day that ye wad hae carried your cursed Jacobite notions to this awfu length. O man, are ye no ashamed o' yoursel, to be gaun about this way wi' your bare houghs to the win. Its maist undecent, and no like a man o' your years and station ava."

"Well, well, Archy; never mind my dress; sorry how ever it doesn't please you," said Mr Dundonald; "but tell me what has brought you here, and what is it you want with me?"

"Want wi' ye," replied Archy; "I want ye, in the first place, to get a pair of breeks on your hinder end; I want ye, in the next place, to cut a' connection wi' that baun o' cut-throats; and I want ye, in the third place, to come hame to your ain house, and to sit down quietly at your ain fireside, and no to be rinin through the country this way like an auld fule as ye are, wi' a kilt on your hurdies, and a naked dirk in your haun: that's what I want ye to do, and I fancy its no very unreasonable."

Under ordinary circumstances, Mr Dundonald would have replied to this exordium, as usual, with a series of select epithets, expressive of his sentiments on the subjects of Archy's capacity, his patriotism, his sense of honour; but, on this occasion, he had a purpose to serve, which demanded an opposite line of conduct. This purpose was to pave the way, by a slight exercise of the soothing system, for the proposed operations of the Prince on Archy's political prejudices. Acting on this system—

"Well, Archy," replied Mr Dundonald, "we'll think of it. In the meantime, here is the Prince coming; and, on my account, I hope you will at least be civil to him. Take off your bonnet."

Archy immediately did as he was desired; and, in the next instant, the Prince, who had now ridden up to him, thus accosted him:—

"I am sorry, my good friend, to learn, from Captain Dundonald here, that you do not view either me or my cause with much favour."

"Indeed, sir, to be plain wi' ye, I do not," replied Archy, stoutly. "I by nae means approve o' the errand ye hae come upon."

"Well, I cannot blame you for that," replied the Prince. "Every man, my good friend, will still entertain his own opinions on these matters; and, for me, they shall always be at liberty to do so. I shall never seek to constrain the sentiments of any man; nor, I trust, shall I ever be wanting in proper indulgence to those who differ from me."

"Weel, sir, that's no unsensibly spoken, I maun allow," replied Archy, already a good deal mollified, although unconsciously, by the affable and gracious manner of the Prince. "I hae heard waur sentiments than thae delivered at a fair."

"I am glad, my friend, that you approve of them," said the Prince; and, slapping Archy familiarly on the shoulder, added, "I do not know but you and I might improve on each other by a better acquaintance."

"I'm no quite clear about their bein muckle mair o' that, sir," replied Archy, smiling. "I like aye to choose my company, and canna say that I greatly fancy a friendship that smells sae strong o' hemp. Ye understaun me. sir," added Archy, raising his hand significantly to his neck,

The Prince acknowledged full comprehension of the gentle allusion, by a hearty laugh, in which he was joined by all the by-standers.

"I trust," he said, "that friendship to me does not necessarily or inevitably lead to such a conclusion, Archy."

"They're owre near conneckit, however, sir, I doot," replied the latter.

The conference between the Prince and Archy was here interrupted by a demand for the former's presence in another part of the field; but, ere he rode off, he shook Archy by the hand, and requested that he might see him again before he left Perth.

"Well, Archy," said his master, on the departure of the young Adventurer, "what think ye of the Prince?"

"Really, after a', I maun acknowledge that he's no juist what I expected. He seems, I maun say't, a fine, decent, sensible sort o' lad. Nae airs aboot him in the sma'est; but just as plain's he's pleasant. I hae nae faut to fin wi' the chiel himsel, but the business he has come upon's a different thing—clean different; it's there a' the mischief lies." Then, after a momentary pause—"Now, Mr Dundonald," he added, "are ye ready to listen to guid advice? Are ye ready to discuss the point wi' me o' gaun hame to your ain house."

"No, not at this moment, Archy," replied his master; "but I'll tell you what, after we are dismissed, let me see you at my quarters, at the sign of the Three Magpies, and we'll then and there talk the matter over."

Having said this, Mr, or Captain Dundonald, as he was now called, hurried away to join his company—being the last of the group that remained on the spot; all the rest having gone off, one after another, to occupy their respective positions in the different corps under inspection.

Archy remained on the ground till the review was over, and finally entered the town with the mingled crowd of citizens and soldiers that poured into it at the conclusion of the warlike display on the Inch.

On gaining the city, Archy inquired for the Three Magpies; and was guided by a boy, to whom he had applied for information, to the door of that well-frequented hostelry. Here he found his master; and here he renewed the diet, of which Mr Dundonald had requested, as already related, a desertion *pro loco et tempore*.

"If my advice," said Archy—thus again opening the case—"If my advice 'll hae nae effect on ye, ye'll surely gie some heed to what Mr Ramsay says. Here's a letter"—(and, as he said this, he plunged his hand into a side pocket)—"here's a letter frae him, in the whilk ye'll fin the sensible man recommendin ye to put yoursel wholly under my guidance, to be direckit and advised by me as circumstances may demaun."

Mr Dundonald took the letter, opened, and read it; and, without making any remark on its contents, thrust it into his pocket.

"Well, Archy, I'll tell you what it is, regarding this matter," he said, after taking a turn or two up and down the room in silence. "It would not, as even you may see, be consistent with my honour to leave the Prince's service at this particular juncture, however desirous I might be to take such a step. It would look like poltroonery, Archy."

"What's that?" interrupted the latter.

"Poltroonery! cowardice, Archy, cowardice. It would look like cowardice. Now, the next point to which the Prince's army will direct its march, is Edinburgh, where, in the event of our obtaining possession of the city, I can retire from active service with much greater propriety than I could do here; because I will then have seen the Prince master, as it were, of his native kingdom of Scotland; in possession of its metropolis, and his adventure thus so far completed. Now, Archy, if you will stick by me till then, I promise you that I will take your advice into my most serious consideration. My honour requires that I do not think of it sooner"

"Honour!" repeated Archy, with a contemptuous smile. "What on earth hae ye to do wi' honour. Sma honour, I think, in getting a rape about your craig: and there's nae ither sort o' honour that I ken o' conneckit wi' the business ye're engaged in. Tak ye my advice, and leave honour to them that are sae unfortunate as to hae naething else to depend upon. Honour maks but thin kail; tak my word for that. There was ance a vriter chiel that I kent, that was ay blawin awa about his honour, and that wad tak nae jobs on haun that warna o' a fair straught-forward natur; and what was the consequence? He was starvin whan ithers about him war makin rich. That was a' he made by his honour."

"Well, well, Archy, to cut this matter short, I tell you again, that I will not quit the Prince's army just now: that I will march with it to Edinburgh; and that I will then, and not till then, consider of the propriety of withdrawing from it. Now, if you choose to abide by me till that period, on this understanding, you may; if not, pack home with you directly, on pain of my highest displeasure."

"Hame, no a fit, unless ye gang wi' me," replied Archy, cooly. "No ae fit. I'm determined, now that I hae got ye, no to quat the gripe o' ye until I either see ye hame or hanged. That's my determination, sae mak o't what ye like."

"Be it so, then, Archy," replied his master. "You will then, in the meantime, take up your quarters in this house, and attend me as usual; but, mark me, don't be sporting your political sentiments within hearing of any one belonging to the Prince's army, otherwise you may chance to be rather suddenly introduced to the acquaintance of some stray dirk or other."

In consequence of the above arrangement, Archy now attached himself to his master's person, and remained in Perth until the Prince's army left it to proceed to Edinburgh. During this period, Archy came frequently in contact with the former, and was so won upon by his affability and condescension, as to be brought the length of forming something like an absolute attachment to his person. The Prince, on the other hand, was delighted with the bluntness and peculiar character of Muirhead, and, amused with his oddities, took much pleasure in conversing with him, especially in twitting him with his want of loyalty to himself, and in exciting his irascibility on the subject of his own pretensions.

The singularity of Archy's character becoming known to, and understood by, several of Dundonald's brother officers, they found in it a never-failing source of amusement, but were particulary delighted with his outrageous aversion to, and horror of, the Highland dress; to tartan in any and all its shapes an aversion and horror which he took every safe opportunity of expressing, and that in no very measured terms. This weak point of Archy's character having attracted particular attention, it was resolved, with the connivance and promised co-operation of Mr Dundonald, to make it the subject of a series of habillary experiments, which, it was expected, would yield no small amusement. The object of this design was to get Archy into tartans, and, if possible, into the kilt. How this was accomplished the course of our story must divulge.

On the morning of the 11th of September, 1745, Archy was awakened at an early hour by the sound of the bagpipes, screaming "The Gathering of the Clans" through the still silent streets of Perth. It was the day fixed on for the departure of the Highland army: the day on which it was to begin its march to the capital. It was pitch dark when Archy arose, and he had some scrambling before he could lay his hands on his clothes—a difficulty which was increased by his master, and several others, clamorously calling him to make haste, otherwise he would be left behind; in which case, they assured him, he would be murdered by the Royalists of the city.

In great trepidation at this alarming intelligence, Archy

hurried on his clothes as fast as he could, and hastened to take his place as near to his master as circumstances would permit.

For about the space of an hour, the Rebel army, with Archy in the centre of it, moved on in almost utter darkness. At length, however, daylight broke, and surrounding objects became gradually more and more distinctly visible.

During this time, Archy had found, or thought he found, his coat a little tighter than usual, and had indulged in a series of hitches and wrigglings, from time to time, in order to give it a little additional width. To this circumstance, however, he paid no particular attention till daylight began to discover certain peculiarities in the colour of the garment alluded to, which rather surprised the wearer. Archy thought the sleeve of his bridle arm had, as he said himself, "a queer sort o' look;" he raised it to his eye, he examined it narrowly for an instant, when, lo! the broad, bright red stripes of the Stuart tartan made themselvs manifest to his confounded senses. It was a tartan coat. "Gude's mercy! whar, or hoo on earth hae I gotten this!" Archy exclaimed in horror, as he gazed on the abominated fabric. "Of a' kind o' coats on earth, hoo should I come by a tartan ane. Aweel, this cowes the gowan. If I'm no hanged for a rebel wi' the lave, it'll no be for want o' evidence. This cursed coat alane wad hang a dizzen!"

At this moment, Archy's master, and other two or three officers, came up to the distressed and perplexed servitor and gravely congratulated him on the change which, they presumed, from his appearing in a tartan coat, had taken place in his sentiments. Archy by no means relished the joke; but, with the utmost earnestness, requested that some of them would lend him a coat "o' honest claith;" he said, "he cared na o' what colour, size, or shape, provided it wasna tartan, till either he recovered his ain, or could find an opportunity to get a new ane."

All the gentlemen, with one voice, declared, that they would have been most happy to oblige him, but that they had no such article about them as he wanted; not an inch of cloth, they assured him, in the shape of coat, waistcoat, or trowsers, but what was of tartan. As to his getting a new coat, they said, he need entertain no hopes of that until they got to Edinburgh; and that as to recovering the old one, it was a thing quite out of the question; there being no time, they said, to look after old coats.

Obliged, then, to put up, the best way he could, with the offensive garment, which a strange mischance had thus so curiously thrown in his way, Archy jogged on in no very good-humour, but in the comforting hope of being soon able, by some means or other, to procure a coat of more unobjectionable complexion. It was observed, however, that he was now most fastidiously careful to avoid, as much as possible, being seen by the inhabitants of the villages through which they passed; and, indeed, to avoid the scrutiny of every chance traveller whom they met. A caution which, doubtless, proceeded from a fear of being identified, and, probably, sworn to, at some future period, as a notorious rebel, of which his coat, and the circumstance of his being with the Prince's army, would be held, he did not question, indubitable proof.

On the evening of the day on which they left Perth, the Prince's army reached Dumblane, where they encamped in an open field about a mile to the south of that town. Many of the officers, however, and, amongst them, Archy's master, and two or three others of his most intimate companions in arms, quartered in a public-house in the village. Thither Archy was also invited; an invitation which, we need hardly say, he very readily accepted. At an early hour of the following morning, and while Archy was yet enjoying a comfortable snoose, two of his master's friends rushed into the room in which he slept, and, in great alarm, called on him, for God's sake, to rise instantly, as he valued his life, as a large body of Gairdner's dragoons were just upon them.

"Lord hae mercy on us!" shouted Archy, leaping from his bed in great terror. "This is a terrible scrape I hae gotten into! Whar's my claes?" And he began groping about the apartment—it being still quite dark—for the desiderated garments; all of which, excepting his trowsers, he readily found. These, however, could not be got. "Whar's my breeks?" shouted Archy, in great trepidation; "whar's my breeks?"

"Curse your breeches—never mind them!" said one of the gentlemen, "unless you desire to be sabered on the spot. There, there see, clap on this kilt in the meantime, as you cannot possibly go into the street in the condition you are in, and you will get a pair of trowsers afterwards."

"Let's see't, then," said Archy, "sin it maun be sae; let's see't, in Gude's name!" and, snatching at the proferred garment, he hastened to wrap it round his middle the best way he could, being assisted in his toilet by the person who had so readily furnished him with this substitute for his missing inexpressibles.

Having thus rendered himself as fit for public view as circumstances would permit, Archy, and the gentlemen who had so timeously alarmed him, hurried out of the house, and pushed on, as fast as they could drive, towards the main body of the army, which was encamped, as already related, at about a mile's distance from Dumblane, and which had just began the day's march when they came up.

Archy now again joined his master; but, on this occasion, he was on foot—having, in the hurry of his evacuation of Dumblane, left his Bucephalus behind him.

On coming up with his master—

"Ony word o' the dragoons?" said Archy; "I see naething o' them; and yet, I was tell't they war just upon us."

"Oh! it has been a false alarm, I dare say," replied Mr Dundonald. "Such things are frequent in time of war."

"I wish to gudeness I had kent that!" replied Archy, "and I wadna hae made a public spectacle o' mysel in this way as I hae dune," glancing at his kilt. "Ae way and anither, I hae brocht mysel to a pretty pass, I think; I'm now as ready for the rape as ony o' ye. Is it no a queer thing, that I should fin mysel, as I do at this moment, rigged out *kep-a-pea*, whether I liked or no, in the dress of a' dresses that I abhor the maist. It's a most extraordinar thing, and most unaccountable. Yes, here am I in the very midst o' the Rebel army, and a' tartan, frae teeth to tae—just the very twa things that I wad hae maist anxiously avoided. *It is* a queer thing. Providence send me safe out o' this awfu' mess; for things are evidently beyond my control."

At this moment, the same party of officers, with some others who had congratulated Archy on a former occasion, came up with a similar intention on the present.

"Glad to see the advance you are making in the assumption of the Highland garb, Archy!" said one: "you become the kilt amazingly."

"A true Highlander!" said a second; "A genuine Celt; you'll pass for a descendant of Fingal anywhere, Archy."

"Gibe awa, lads; gibe awa!" replied Archy: "It's your turn the day; it'll maybe be mine the morn, whan ye're a' gaun doon, in a string, to the Grassmarket, wi' halters aboot your necks."

"Faith, Archy, I don't know any man amongst us more likely to end there than yourself!" said a young officer amongst the group by whom Archy was now surrounded. "The dress you wear, and the company you have kept for the last week, have classified you properly, I warrant you. You are booked, Archy; take my word for that."

These remarks struck Archy rather too forcibly, and had fully too much of the character of probability in them to be taken by that worthy in the same jocular spirit in which they were made. He, however, attempted a smile; but it was a decided failure, as he shortly replied—

"Tak ye care o' your ain neck, frien, an' I'll tak care o' mine."

Unable to mend the awkward circumstances in which he found himself placed, Archy was compelled to submit to march on with the Rebel army, "all plaided and plumed in his tartan array;" but he did so with a secret resolution to cut the concern as soon as he possibly could, although this he had no hopes of being able to accomplish—at least if he expected to carry his master along with him—till he reached Edinburgh.

To console him, however, for the mental misery he was enduring, he had frequent very amicable little conferences with the Prince, who, as the others had done, congratulated him on his appearance in the kilt, and on the change which he presumed—from his having adopted that airy piece of dress—had taken place in his sentiments.

"You look the Highlander well, Archy," said the Prince; "admirably. You have the true Celtic cut about you."

To these, and other similar compliments, Archy replied with a grim smile. He evidently did not relish the joke, as his failure in every attempt to meet the matter in a similar spirit sufficiently proved.

On the afternoon of the 6th day from that on which they left Perth, the insurgent army arrived in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, and, we need hardly add, Archy along with them. That worthy was still in his warlike costume, for no opportunity for a change of apparel had yet presented itself.

Archy's situation was now eminently critical; and he felt it to be so. Events were now approaching, which, from their nature, their publicity, and notoriety, would infallibly associate him, beyond redemption, with the proceedings of the insurgents. To enter Edinburgh with them, especially in the costume he was then in, he reckoned to be the same thing as putting the dreaded rope about his own neck; and to attempt getting in by himself, would expose him to the risk of being apprehended; and, finally, to the detection of his connection with the Rebels, which, he felt assured, nothing that he could say would place it in its true light in the eyes of his captors. They would not believe him. Archy thus saw nothing but the very extremity of personal danger on all hands, whether he separated himself from the insurgents, or remained by them. On duly weighing the matter, however, he thought his greater safety, on the whole, lay in the latter proceeding, and on this he accordingly determined.

When the Prince's army, then, entered Edinburgh, our involuntary Rebel entered along with them, taking care, however, to expose himself as little as possible to public view, in case he should be recognised by any one who knew him, and thus furnish an evidence of his traitorous proceedings, which might afterwards prove troublesome. To obliterate, as far and as fast as possible, all trace of them, Archy took an early opportunity of slinking into privacy. As the main body of the insurgent army marched down the High Street, he slipped down a close, made as fast as he could for a broker's shop in St Mary's Wynd, and there got himself once more arrayed in a suit of "honest claith," as he called it.

Thus restored to himself again, Archy sought out his master, and again broached the subject of the latter's desertion of the Prince's cause.

To his great disappointment and displeasure, however, he found Mr Dundonald had determined on following out the fortunes of that personage, and would by no means listen to any proposal leading to a different result.

"Aweel, if ye are determined," said Archy, after a fruitless altercation on the subject, "in Gude's name go; ye'll see what'll be the end o't. Ye hae gotten Edinburgh canny aneugh; but there'll be broken heads gaun, by and by; tak my word for that. Ye'll no carry a' thing before ye this way lang."

"Probably not, Archy," said Dundonald; "but my honour forbids me entertaining for a moment any thought of abandoning the cause in which I have embarked. I must see the end of it, Archy."

"My feth, ye'll no think muckle o't when ye do, I'm dootin," interposed the latter.

'Well, perhaps so; but that is my determination," replied Mr Dundonald; "and I advise you to return home instantly, Archy. You only expose yourself to needless risk, by remaining with me."

"I wish to guidness I mayna be ower far in already," said the latter. "Yon cursed kilt business, I doot, 'll mak a noise yet, and bring me into trouble."

Finding it in vain to attempt changing his master's determination, Archy returned to Stonielands to await the result of the Prince's enterprise, and the decision of his master's fate, in so far as it was concerned with that proceeding.

The latter was nearer at hand than the former. Mr Dundonald was wounded at Preston, and died a few days after in Edinburgh, to which he had been removed after the engagement.

Archy, in the meantime, was living quietly at Stonielands, but not without being sorely oppressed by a secret terror that the kilt business, as he called it, would, one day or other, rise up in judgment against him.

For some months, however, everything remained quiet around him; and Archy began to entertain hopes that his share in the insurrection would escape the notice of the government, as that of his master—a much more conspicious and important case—seemed also to have been lost sight of, no steps whatever having been taken against the property of the deceased, or notice of any kind of the part he had acted in the Rebellion. But there was a reason for all this, that might not have occurred to Archy; and, if it had, would have somewhat abated the satisfaction with which he began to hug himself on his safety. This was the fact, that the Prince was still pursuing a successful career, and that the authorities were, in consequence, afraid to act. The law was paralysed; it was inert; and hence the deceitful calm in which poor Archy reposed. A day, however, was coming, and that not distant, when a very different state of matters was to present itself. When it did come, Archy marked it, and saw at once that it was only then that his troubles were likely to begin.

About a month after the battle of Culloden—which, our readers know, laid for ever prostrate the hopes of the Prince and his adherents—as Archy was sitting one evening by the fire, musing on the past events of his life, and, amongst the rest, on his adventure with the Rebel army, which again passed, by a natural transition, to the sanguinary executions at Carlisle, which were then in progress, he was suddenly startled by a loud rapping at the front door of the house. Archy was still residing in the mansion-house of Stonielands; no one, in the confusion and alarm in which the country was, having yet appeared to look after the property.

With some dismal forebodings as to the purpose of the visiters, Archy hastened to obey their noisy summons, so far as to plant himself behind the door. Having taken up this position—

"Wha's there?" he inquired.

"Persons on urgent business!" was the reply.

"An what kind o' bisness may't be, if I may speer?" said Archy.

"Open the door, and we'll inform you!" responded a

gruff voice through the key-hole; "and if you don't, we'll batter it about your ears."

"The Lord be wi' me! here it's at last," muttered Archy, as he undid the fastenings of the door. "Here's that cursed bisness comin to a crisis noo. I ay feared this."

In the meantime, the door, even before it had been quite relieved from the last bolt, was furiously burst open, and three men in greatcoats, and with short, thick sticks in their hands, rushed in.

"Is your name," said one of them, addressing Archy, "Archibald Muirhead; and were you servant to the late James Dundonald, Esq., of Stonielands?"

"The same, at your honour's service to comman," replied Archy, with great humility.

"Just so. Well then, I arrest you in the King's name, on a charge of high treason."

"Traison, gentlemen! what! na; traison? Whan did I commit traison?" exclaimed Archy, in great trepidation.

"Why, you know that best yourself, friend," said the first speaker; "but if you don't, the Lord Advocate will tell you all about it. In the meantime, you'll go with us, if you please."

"Surely, surely, gentlemen," replied Archy; "but it's a mistak this, I assure ye. The King hasna a mair loyal subject in a' his dominions than I am."

"Very likely," said one of the men, laughing; "but there are some little discrepancies in that story, friend, which you must reconcile; such as your joining the Pretender's army, at Perth, with your master; your marching with that army to Edinburgh, in the Highland dress, and armed to the teeth."

"I deny the arming," said Archy, eagerly; "I deny't *in toto*. Deil anither weapon had I about me but a bit hazel rung. As to the kilt, that I winna deny; for it's true aneuch—owre true; but, I can explain't awa, if I'll only be listened to, and believed; as I will do likewise the circumstance o' my being wi' the Rebel army. It's a' a mistak, I assure ye, gentlemen; a' a mistak."

"Well, well, you and the Lord Advocate will settle that," replied the first speaker, who seemed to be the chief personage of the three; "but, I doubt it will end in your getting an airing in the Grassmarket, friend. But we must be jogging. Come, come along." And the fellow grasped Archy by the collar; another of the party seized him on the other side; and, thus secured, he was conducted to a chaise that was in waiting on the high road, at the entrance to the avenue which led to the Stonieland's house.

Into this vehicle the unfortunate Rebel was now thrust; a messenger, or officer—for such, we need not say, the visiters were—taking his place on either side of him; while the third seated himself beside the driver. Thus disposed of, the party started, and, after the lapse of several hours, arrived safely in Edinburgh.

On this consummation taking place, the chaise, to Archy's unspeakable horror, drove up to the jail door. A creaking of hinges and jingling of keys followed; and, ere Archy knew either what he himself or those about him were doing, he found himself lodged in an apartment of some seven feet by three, with a window about ten inches square, strongly secured with bars of iron, every one as thick as his own wrist. Here Archy was locked up for the night; and here he remained for ten days without receiving any communication whatever from any one on the subject of his incarceration; of the ultimate issue of it, he had himself no doubt; he believed that it would end in his being hanged; and was doing what he could to make up his mind to this pleasing result.

At the end of the period above named, however, he found himself unexpectedly called upon, one forenoon, to attend at the office of the sheriff-clerk, to undergo a precognition, previous to his being served with an indictment to stand trial for high treason. In obedience to this call, Archy, attended by two officers, was marched to the scene of his impending examination. The display that met Archy on entering the apartment appointed for the intended proceedings in his case, was rather a formidable one. There was a large table in the middle of the floor, covered with papers; and, around this table sat a number of persons of grave and solemn demeanour. Amongst these was the Lord Advocate himself, and several other crown lawyers; for all these functionaries were now on the *qui vive* as to matters of treason, and anxious to display their loyalty and zeal, by a vigorous discharge of their official duties in such cases.

Archy having been desired to take a seat, his examination, which was conducted by the Lord Advocate himself, immediately commenced in the shape of cross-questioning; and perhaps no process of this kind ever elicited anything so odd and characteristic, from a person under examination, as that exhibited in the responses of Archy on this occasion. The blunt, homely, ludicrousness of these, was more than a match for the gravity of the examinators, who could not help frequently bursting into laughter in the course of the precognition. The subject of Archy's kilt, in particular, afforded a fund of amusement; he having, with great gravity and simplicity, detailed every circumstance connected with his temporary and involuntary assumption of that piece of dress.

Dexterously taking advantage of the good-humour into which he saw his statement of facts, or rather his manner of stating facts, had put those into whose hands he was, Archy entered boldly on his defence, which, however, consisted merely in relating what had actually occurred, and in a veritable narration of the motives and circumstances by which he had been alternately guided and compelled; and finally succeeded in making such a favourable impression on the Lord Advocate, and the others present, that they betrayed evident symptoms of being disposed to believe in the truth of his story. The result proved that it was so.

At the conclusion of the examination, Archy was remanded to prison; but, in a week after, the door of his cell was thrown open, and its inmate informed that he was at liberty to go wheresoever he listed.

"God be thankit," said Archy. "I thocht the cursed kilt was gaun to hang me. Catch me wi' the infernal thing on again; I'll rather gang in my shirt tails."

Subsequent inquiries, on the part of the authorities, had established the truth of Archy's story, and convinced them that the part he acted was, indeed, an involuntary one.

On obtaining his freedom, Archy returned to Stonielands; but, he no longer found a home there, in the mansion-house. That house, with all the other property of its owner, was now in the hands of the crown. Archy, however, had saved a little money, and on this he lived comfortably enough, in a small house in the neighbouring village of Mainford, till his death, which happened a few years after.

We have only to add to the particulars which we have given of Archy's history, that he never could endure any allusion to his performances in the year 1745, and that there were few things he so much disliked as any hint of his having been "out" in that eventful year.

WILSON'S

Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE SISTERS.

In offering to the public what follows, I must first be permitted to beg the reader's pardon for obtruding myself and some other obscure characters upon his notice. I have no *regular story* to tell—no intricate plot, in the turnings and windings of which to inveigle him—and no mysterious affairs to unravel. A few incidents in early life, some brief notices of those among whom they occurred, and some feelings and fondly cherished recollections of my own, to which they gave birth, are all I can offer. But as there are few who, at intervals, in after life, do not look back upon youth—its innocent sports, its thoughtless gaiety, its vivid feelings, and its supposed exemption from care—with a sort of pleasing regret; so I would hope there are few who will be seriously offended with this attempt to snatch from oblivion a few scanty reminiscences of that happy period.

I was born at a place called *Denfoot*, of which my father was farmer. The place, as the reader may guess, took its name from its situation. The house and farmstead stood at the lower extremity of a deep ravine, which communicated with a small lake above, and served as a natural channel to conduct its waters down to the open country. These waters had been diverted from their original course by the ingenuity of our forefathers, and, after being led for some distance along the side of the bank, were, at last, made to turn a mill, which also belonged to the establishment. Here the early part of my life was spent; and the first occupation of which I have any distinct recollection, was attempting to make the stream turn the tiny machinery, which one of my father's *herds* had constructed for me. That scene is still as fresh in my memory as if it had occurred but yesterday. The Den above, with all its sweeps and curvatures, and the corresponding windings of the stream, is also deeply engraven on my remembrance. Along the bottom, and close to the margin of the stream, lay a footpath, seldom trodden by any one except the miller and myself—the former of whom had to make his daily pilgrimages to open and shut the loch, which served as a mill-dam. One summer morning, when I was little more than four years of age, he took me along with him, and then, for the first time, I saw the scene. A strong mound of earth had been thrown across the neck of the loch, through which a deep and narrow passage, supported on either side by rude masonry, had been left. At the upper end of this passage, and near the middle of the embankment, stood the sluice, with its half-decayed posts—a heavy pressure of water above, and the black and water-worn stones of the building below. When the miller began to perform his wonted operation; well do I remember feeling a strange sensation of terror and delight, as I lay upon my knees, gazing down into the deep dark chasm, and saw the first white jet of water burst from under the sluice. And then, as he gradually raised the ponderous machine with his screw above, and the waters began to acquire volume and strength below, I felt almost overpowered with a feeling of awe, which, till this moment, I had never experienced, as I saw them foam boil and rush on in furious haste, to escape from the narrow channel by which they were there confined.

Though I have no reason for supposing that I am, or ever was, what poets and authors call *a lover of Nature* from the earliest period of my recollection there was a charm for me in woods, waters, rocks, and mountains, for which I found no equivalent elsewhere. The solemn shadow of the first, the headlong rush or the placid murmurs of the second, the frowning majesty of the third, and the solitude and vastness of the fourth, have often inspired me with feelings for which I have no language. And thus, after having once seen the little scene just noticed, morning after morning, and evening after evening, I accompanied the miller to see him open and shut the loch, till every bush, brake, and stone, and almost every blade of grass in the Den, had become familiar to my eye. At the upper end of the ravine, and almost immediately above the loch, was another farm, much smaller than that rented by my father, which also derived its name from its situation, it being called *Denhead*. As matters stand at the present day, it could hardly be called a *farm*; for it supported only one individual and his family, which consisted of a wife and four daughters, the last of whom were, like myself, at the time mere children. But, with the Marshalls, I had as yet, and, indeed, for many years afterwards, no acquaintance farther than hearing their names occasionally mentioned.

I had nearly completed my seventeenth year; but, as I was an only son, and my father had determined on making me a great man, hitherto I had done little except going to school. When there, however, I was more famous for swimming and diving in a neighbouring mill dam, with some other feats of boyish dexterity, than for learning. But everything must come to an end: my school education was considered nearly complete, and my father was beginning to think about the best means for enabling me to acquire a fortune, when the *herd* was taken ill of small-pox; and, as I had little more to learn, and nothing else to do, I was sent with the cows in his stead. The pasture, for that season, was principally in the Den, and on a small patch of ground at the neck of the loch; and thither I went, well-pleased with the idea of again spending a few days in this romantic solitude. The first day I passed with some old books and a slate, which I carried with me for amusement, and fancied myself perfectly happy. But I had now arrived at that period of life when the pursuits, the feelings, and the passions of the man have begun to mingle with those of the boy: I was standing on the threshold of a new state of existence; and, on the second day, I began to feel restless, and to fancy that I should be happier if I had some one with whom I could converse. The day, however, passed on, and I saw nobody. But, on the third morning, when I drove my cattle to the head of the Den, I saw Robert Marshall's four daughters spreading out a large quantity of clothes to bleach on the margin of the loch. Short as was the distance between our habitations, we lived in different parishes, had been at different schools, and attended at different churches, and up to this period I had seldom seen them; but, somehow, on the present occasion, I

felt drawn towards them by an irresistible impulse. At first I inquired, sheepishly, if they ever saw any fishes. What answer they gave I do not recollect; but two of them were nearly of my own age; to me there was a something interesting in the very seclusion in which they had lived, and, for a time, we continued to keep up a sort of trifling conversation—at first awkwardly and bashfully enough on my part, but they met my advances with the cordiality and innocent gaiety of youth; by degrees those feelings wore off, and I stood beside them looking at their operations, answering little questions, and asking others of no importance, till the cows had actually destroyed a considerable portion of the corn from which it was my business to keep them.

This little incident, trifling as it was, afforded me a subject for pleasing reflection throughout the day, which appeared uncommonly short; and when they returned in the evening to take home their clothes, I was not long in being again beside them. The cows had now *eaten* their fill, and were quietly ruminating behind the embankment, so that from them I had no apprehensions. Upon this occasion, our conversation was more free and animated than it had been on the former; and, though it was then the middle of June, we talked and laughed till the red sun had set behind the hill, and gloaming was beginning to steal over the scene.

My acquaintance with the sisters had now fairly commenced. How they managed matters before, I know not; but afterwards, every little *washing* was brought to the loch, so that I had frequent opportunities of seeing them; and, while I was treated kindly by all, Jane and Mary, who were neither the oldest nor the youngest, began to occupy a higher place in my esteem than the others. Whether it was that this feeling, or rather the effect which it had upon my conduct, had drawn their attention more decidedly, or whether their greater kindness had produced the feeling, I never could determine, but once begun, it continued to gather strength; and, while they seemed to be perfectly aware of my partiality for them, each appeared to vie with the other in her endeavours to return it. Young as I was too, I soon remarked, that their hair was more neatly braided, and their caps—when they wore them—cleaner, and adjusted with greater care than those of their sisters. As the season advanced, our intimacy increased: I gathered rasps and wild strawberries for them in the Den; and, when the larger fruits began to ripen, as they took their turns at *watering the claes*, each would bring an apple from a tree which grew in their father's garden. Well do I remember it was Mary who brought the first; and, I suppose, it must have been the largest on the tree, for I never got another like it. It was her too who first invited me to be a visiter at the house; but her invitation was no sooner given than it was repeated by Jane. Often and earnestly I was pressed, "if I were *dry*, never to think of tasting the loch water, which was not good, but to come up and get a drink;" or "if I was cauld, to come up and get a *warm*;" or, "if it were a rainy day, to come up and *scoug* a while." And, if truth must be told, I sometimes availed myself so far of their kindness as to go in quest of water when I could scarcely drink it, and to pretend cold when I had to wipe the sweat from my brow before going in. But, upon these occasions, whatever they might think, no one seemed to notice my inconsistency.

Though the *herd* recovered he did not return, and I continued to supply his place through what remained of the summer. It was the month of August—the early part of it, I think—and the day was one of the most beautiful which that or any other season ever produced; the sky, with the exception of a few specks of dark coloured vapour in the south-west, was blue and cloudless; and the sun shone down with a brilliancy and a heat which, in after years, might have been oppressive; but our buoyant spirits felt it not. The wild duck led forth her brood—now almost ready to shift for themselves—from the bulrushes, to bask a while in the meridian beam; and, ever and anon, as they began to stray, she called them together again, evincing for them a parent's care even to the last. The *coot* rode secure among the water lilies, and dipped his white forehead in the wave, and rose and looked around, and dipped it again, without having any apparent motive for doing so beyond that flow of animal spirits which cannot be wholly repressed. Not a breath of wind was on the loch; its surface was as smooth as glass, and, like a mirror, reflected every object within view—from the gray stone and the hazel bush on its banks to the distant hill, on whose summit the sky seemed to rest; from the little shallop which lay motionless on its bosom, to the burning sun overhead. The illusion, however, was occasionally broken by the *pike*, "in wantonness of play," darting several feet out of the water, and dipping again with a splash which made

> "Glimm'ring fragments of a broken sun,
> Banks, trees, and skies, in thick disorder run."

It was then common for every farmer's, and almost every cotter's, wife to have what was called a *great washing* at least once in the year—that is, towels, table-cloths, shirts, sheets, blankets, and every other article of apparel about the house which would wash, was washed and brought forth to have the benefit of "sun and wind." The preceding day had been the *great washing* day at Denhead, and Helen, Jane, Mary, and Ann Marshall now brought the whole to the loch to bleach. The various articles had been spread out upon the grass, and *watered*; and my cows had sought shelter from the heat in the most cool and shady part of the Den, from which they seemed unwilling again to venture forth, so that I was almost at liberty to go where I pleased. We had sauntered for a while along the margin of the loch—sometimes making little jests, at which, though wiser people might have pitied us, we frequently contrived to laugh; sometimes picking up what we considered a beautiful pebble, and examining its colours; and sometimes gazing at the shoals of fishes, which, owing to the stillness and transparency of the water, we could see almost as distinctly as if they had been on dry land—when Mary's eye caught a water-lily, which, by some accident, had been detached from its stem, floating within arm's length of the shore, a few yards beyond us; and, deeming it a treasure, she started off to secure it for herself. But Jane, whose eye had also fallen upon the aquatic beauty, started at the same moment, and, outstripping her, snatched the flower and held it up in triumph. At this the other seemed to feel both ashamed and disappointed—ashamed, as I fancied, at being outdone in the race; but for her disappointment I could not then account, though I have since learned the cause of it. Trifling as was the loss she had sustained, her gaiety for the time was gone; her feelings seemed to communicate themselves to me by some mysterious agency; and to comfort her and myself, and restore cheerfulness to the company, I promised to swim to the place where they grew, and bring her at least a dozen of water-lilies, the first time I bathed in the loch.

"Cou'd ye no tak her on your back an awa just enoo?" inquired Jane, rather pettishly. "If ye'll only say ye'll do't, I'll rin up for a *tanty creel* to haud them in, an you can *soom* through amon them, an she can sit an' gather till the creel's fu, and then ye may be able to gie the rest a *dizen* as weel as her." This produced a loud laugh from the other sisters, in which, however, Mary did not join, and I joined but faintly.

When it had subsided—"yonder is the boat," said Helen—who was the oldest—"what might hinder you to run round for it and gie us a' a sail, and then ilka ane might

get what pleased her." This proposal was instantly complied with. In a few minutes, I had reached the place where the boat lay moored at a short distance from the shore—and, throwing off my shoes and stockings, waded till I got on board, pulled up the anchor, and brought it across to where they were waiting. None of them had ever been in a boat before; and this boat had only been brought to the loch a few days before, by a gentleman, for the purpose of fishing. They all seemed desirous of prolonging the pleasure which they derived from the novelty of the scene; and as I was willing to gratify them to the utmost of my ability, there were a number of corners and curiosities which we had to examine before proceeding to the ultimatum of our voyage. At last we got among the water-lilies, where innumerable white and golden coloured flowers begemed the waters, while their broad glistening leaves grew so close, that in some places they seemed to unite and form "the carpet of the waves." When there are a number of choices, it is always most difficult to decide. The choosing of the flowers now occupied a considerable time. But, at last, each had selected what she deemed a sufficient quantity; and I was beginning to pull toward the shore, when Mary descried one with a particularly large chalice, and eager, as it appeared, to outdo her sisters in the selection, she requested me to pull up to it. I endeavoured to comply, and she took her place a-head to be ready to snatch it up in passing; but, when we were within a few yards of it, Jane, from a wish to make sport, laid hold of one of the oars, and, dipping it in the water, continued to laugh and to hold it there in spite of my efforts to the contrary. This gave an unexpected turn to our little vessel; a fresh breeze had also sprung up from the south-west; and from these causes operating together the boat fell to leeward of the object upon which I had been directing it.

"Jane! Jane!" cried Mary, in a half-humorous, half expostulating tone, "what are ye doin? But nae matter; I'll get it yet." With these words she bent over the boat's side to snatch the flower; but it was more distant than in her eager haste she had anticipated, and, losing her balance in her endeavour to reach it, she plunged in, and, with a bubbling cry, disappeared. All was now terror and confusion. Shrill screams and convulsive sobs, mingling with frantic cries for help, formed a scene which I cannot describe. But these cries were vain: no one was within hearing. Poor Jane wrung her hands, and *literally* tore her hair, and would have leapt into the water after her sister had not Helen prevented her. Guided by a sort of instinct, and almost unconscious of what I did, I dropped the anchor to prevent the boat from drifting away, threw off my coat and bonnet —my shoes were already off—and plunged in as near the place where she had disappeared as I could guess. The water was not more than eight or ten feet deep; and on reaching the bottom, I quickly discovered her, with the long trailing tangles of some aquatic plant wrapped around her arm; which last circumstance had probably prevented her from rising again, as is common in such cases. It was only the work of a moment to free her; but with me it was already a struggle for life. The bottom, however, was firm, and, grasping her around the waist, I made a desperate spring upward, which without farther effort brought us both to the surface. A wild scream of joy burst from the sisters on seeing us; but, alas! they knew not how little of the rescue had as yet been accomplished. The boat had now swung round to the full length of her cable. As soon as I could recover breath, I called out for assistance; but such was their confusion and inexperience, that none of them could do anything to bring her up to her former position. A dense mass of the water-plants, through which I had no hopes of being able to struggle, interposed between us; a short, broken ripple now agitated the loch, making my task still more difficult and dangerous; my utmost efforts were barely sufficient to keep my burden above water; even for this I felt that they would not long suffice; and, looking round, with a feeling which almost amounted to despair, I fancied that the path between us and the shore was more open; and, in the desperation of the moment, I resolved on trying to reach it. But here, again, I had to contend with some distressing obstacles. The difficulty and danger of passing through masses of trailing aquatic plants, even when unencumbered, will, I doubt not, be familiar to many a swimmer. My feet, and the only hand which I could use, were constantly getting entangled in the long stalks of the water-plants, and it was only by the most desperate efforts that I could free them. The struggles too of my fair, and now more than half unconscious companion, rendered my task doubly perilous. At times she grasped me convulsively around the neck, in such a manner as nearly to prevent breathing; then, as the momentary energy died away, her head drooped heavily, and it was with the utmost difficulty that I could kept it above water; and then, as life and strength returned, she would lay hold of my arm, perhaps at the very moment when I was endeavouring to disentangle it from some trailing water-weed. In this struggle I felt my last remains of strength depart, and, drawing in a long breath, I clasped her closer to my bosom, and sunk, as I supposed, to rise no more. The love of life, however, is strongly rooted in the human heart. The water was not so deep as I had expected; and no sooner had my feet touched the bottom, than I made an effort to rise again; and that effort, feeble as it was, aided by the quantity of air which I had taken down, sent us again, in an oblique direction, to the surface. I was now too much exhausted to make even an attempt at swimming, and we must have gone down in a few seconds, but at that instant my hand grasped something which did not sink. It was a piece of sheep's-skin, which, after being tightly sewed together in the form of a bag, and inflated, had been thrown into the loch, with a hook and bait attached to it, for the purpose of catching fish; and, providentially for us, it had stuck fast where I found it. Thus supported, I continued to keep Mary's head a few inches above water, till hope again revived in my bosom. We were nearer the shore than I had supposed—only a narrow strip of the water-plants lay between us and the clear water; and if I could pass this I thought I might yet save her life and my own. I accordingly quitted my hold, and began once more to buffet the waves. The struggle, however, was a brief one; and had the depth of the water been only a few inches more, it must have terminated fatally. I had reached, and almost passed the last of the water-weeds, when I again got entangled. I made a few desperate efforts to free myself, but to no purpose. My strength was gone, and all appeared to be over. A wild shriek of despair burst from those in the boat as they saw us sinking: it rung indistinctly in my ears; but I could do no more, and down we went. In this last extremity, however, Providence had so ordered it, that, after being wholly under water, I again struggled into something like an erect position; and the reader may guess my glad surprise when I found that I was several inches within my own depth. Here I stood for a short time to recover strength, and then proceeded to wade to the shore.

Before I could reach it, "is she still living," burst simultaneously from her sisters.

To this question it was some minutes before I could give a satisfactory answer. But though terror had overcome her, she had, in fact, imbibed less of the choking element than I had done myself, and I had soon the inexpressible satisfaction of seeing her open her eyes, and begin to breath more freely than could have been expected. By my directions, the other three were now able to pull up the anchor

and thus allow the boat to drift to leeward till she had cleared the water-lilies; where, by wading in till I was nearly up to the neck, I succeeded in laying hold of an oar, which they held out for the purpose, and dragging them to the shore. There was no time to lose; for the last half hour, the sky, unnoticed by us, had been darkening; the sun was no longer visible; large, black, thundry-looking masses of cloud, from the south-west, came careering before the wind; and, at that instant, a loud peal of thunder burst overhead. A dark mist, in some places streaked with dusky white, but so dense as to appear a solid body, was seen approaching and swallowing up every object as it advanced; the howling of a violent tempest was heard from the same direction; and, in a few seconds more, we were overtaken by a terrible shower of hail, accompanied by a perfect hurricane. The air, which, hitherto, had been rather sultry, seemed changed at once to winter; and, in this state, poor Mary—who, from the united effects of cold and wet, was now shivering violently—had to be conveyed home. Fearful as I was lest my charge should have strayed during my long absence, I could not think of leaving her till I had seen her safe under the shelter of her own roof. I accordingly placed my arm around her slender waist to support her; assisted her home; and then, heedless of the caresses of her sisters, and the entreaties of her mother, to stay, I hurried off, with a heart full of fears, to encounter fresh difficulties. Terrified by the thunder, and annoyed by the hail, the cows had strayed, I knew not whither. Wet and dripping as I was, and without either shoes, coat, or bonnet—all of which had been left in the boat—I continued the search till the afternoon was far advanced; and, when I could continue it no longer, I crawled home in such a state of exhaustion as I have seldom experienced either before or since.

In youth, however, the animal functions are vigorous, and the constitution not easily impaired. A slight cold, which went off in a few days, and a severe reprimand from my father, were the only inconveniences which I experienced. But neither the cold nor the reprimand could prevent me from thinking of her whose life I had been the means of saving. The look of mingled gratitude and *affection*—as I thought—with which she regarded me at parting, was ever present to my imagination. I slept but little during that night; when I did sleep, it was only to dream of her; and next morning, as soon as I could drive my charge to the head of the Den, I left them, and hastened to inquire how she was after the accident. A severe cold, accompanied by some nervous symptoms, and a considerable degree of fever, was the result. But even in the midst of suffering, she recognised me with a smile, and appeared more solicitous about my health than her own. By the rest of the family I was received as one who had conferred on them an obligation which they could never repay, and for whom they, in their turn, would have risked their lives. There was, I believe, nothing I could have asked which would have been denied; but they had nothing which I coveted, except one, and that one I never thought of asking—to see her was then enough for me. From that day, as often as circumstances would permit, I was a visiter at Robert Marshall's; and, though the whole of the sisters received me as a brother, they now seemed to understand that it was Mary who brought me there, and that she had a sort of exclusive right to my company. In eight or ten days, with the exception of a slight cough, she was almost well again; and if at any time she chanced to be out when I arrived, Jane was always the first to go and call her in.

When the harvest commenced—which was not till the first of September—another *herd* was procured, and I was sent along with the shearers. Thus deprived of my daily visits, I occasionally stole out after supper-time and spent an hour or two with the sisters, and with Mary, who sometimes accompanied me a short distance on my way home. Twice, I think, I had protracted my stay till the rest of the family were in bed; and, had it not been for Katty Allan, the servant maid, I might have quartered on the wrong side of the door. Katty, however, rose to let me in; but not without making her own observations as to the cause of my stay.

"Ah Davy, Davy," was her usual salutation, "ye'r ower soon begun; but, slip awa to your bed, like a man, an' say naething, for fear your faither hear ye."

At the conclusion of harvest, both Mary and her sisters took care to have me duly apprised of the evening on which their *maiden*, or *kirn*, as it is called in other parts of the country, would take place; and I as duly attended. On this occasion, besides themselves, an old man who had acted as *bandster*, and two young women who were *shearers* there were present three other individuals whom I scarcely expected to meet—one was a young delicate-looking lad, of rather diminutive stature, who was horse-herd, or what was in those days called *hauflin*, upon a neighbouring farm. He appeared to have but little to say, but that little was always addressed to Helen; and though she was considerably older—nearly the head taller—and to all appearance so much stouter than him, that, had she exerted herself she might have thrown him over her shoulder, upon her looks and smiles he seemed to live throughout the evening; nor were these withheld. The second was a fine-looking, tall, dashing young fellow—a ploughman from a place about four miles distant—who, as Mary told me afterwards, had lately seen Jane at the market; and, with a forwardness which appeared quite natural to him, immediately proposed coming to see her, if she would tell him where she lived. The necessary information had, it seemed, been given; and he had found some excuse or other for dropping in on that particular evening. But Jane, as yet, appeared at a loss whither to take his attentions in good part, or discard him for his impudence. The third, and last of the strangers, was a weaver, said to be rather rich, who, in addition to his trade, had several acres of land, and two cows; and every one, except Ann herself, seemed perfectly aware that it was for her he came. Well might the ancients speak of Love as being "blind!" Poor girl! she was little more than *fifteen*; and, if ever love had entered her head or heart, it is likely he would have been the last man of whom she would have thought.

Each, however, had contrived to get seated beside the lass of his choice; and, when the *maiden supper* was over, and the tankard and glass had circulated, a dance was proposed. The motion was immediately seconded by a large majority; whereat the old bandster, who, in his better days, had been rather a noted musician, drew forth a fiddle from a very equivocal-looking cover—something between an old stocking and an old sack—and began to put the same in tune. This accomplished, we took the floor with our respective partners; and to any unconcerned spectator, it must have been amusing to see our various performances. The little, pale-faced, diminutive lad did his utmost to fan the flame which he had kindled in the bosom of the tall, stout, and rather graceful-looking Helen. The dashing ploughman snapped his fingers, shewed a wonderful degree of awkward agility, caught Jane round the waist, and tried to kiss her; while she, half-pleased and half-offended with the freedoms which he took, appeared willing to preserve as great a distance as possible between them, and seemed, at one time, proud, and, at another, ashamed of her lover. The weaver was too grave and too serious to dance; but I was too deeply absorbed with other thoughts to admit of paying much attention to him. I saw the light, slender form of Mary before me; I saw her thread the dance like a fawn; and, ever and anon, as anything odd occurred, her soft

hazel eye turned upon me, with an expression of archness which I can never forget. The brightness of her smile too is fresh in my memory. But she did not always smile. There was, occasionally, a degree of languor in her countenance; and at times she was affected with a cough—the remains of her late illness.

Of all who were present, the father of the family seemed to derive least enjoyment from the scene. There was frequently a thoughtfulness in his looks, as if he had been trying to penetrate the future, and calculate the consequences of those little attachments which were but now begun. He was the first to propose a termination of the revel. And, shortly thereafter, when we began to move off, Mary, who accompanied me out, brought me back, saying, that "she was certain her father would be glad of an opportunity of seeing me after the house was clear of these fools." With her suggestion, as it promised me the pleasure of being near her for a little longer, I most readily complied, and was again received by both father and mother with the greatest kindness.

After some trifling conversation—"You will soon have to play your part in the world," said Robert Marshall, who was already in the decline of life, and looked older than his years; "and though your hopes and prospects may be now flattering, believe me, my young friend, when I tell you that *there* you will have much to suffer, and much to endure. Care and disappointment, to a certain extent, are the portion even of the most prosperous, and these are comparatively few. But, in the most desperate circumstances, do nothing rashly, and never yield to despair. Take no hazardous step till you have well considered its consequences. Strive to do your own part well, and trust to heaven for the accomplishment of your wishes sooner or later. To do so is wise and manly: the reverse is cowardly and mean. But, after everything has been done which man can do, heaven, for purposes which our understandings cannot scan, may see proper to crown all with disappointment at last; and if this should happen, comfort yourself with the idea that it is better for you, or for some one else, that you should be disappointed, and try to learn resignation to the will of Him without whose notice a sparrow falls not to the ground."

Though it was past midnight when I got home, I found Katty Allan still waiting to receive me; but instead of her usual banter, she told me, with evident concern, that my father had been twice in the kitchen inquiring what had become of me—that she had endeavoured to excuse me by saying I had maybe gane to the smithy; but, notwithstanding his inquiries, that she was almost certain he knew perfectly where I was. This information gave me a good deal of uneasiness. But I was agreeably disappointed next morning, when my father only made some general remarks on the impropriety of *boys* absenting themselves from home, and the necessity which their parents and guardians were under of making a proper provision against those errors into which they were likely to run.

The circumstance, however, made me more careful as to the time and length of my visits than I had hitherto been; and it was not till *Halloween* that I again ventured to spend another evening at Denhead. To the pastimes and auguries of this particular night I had been specially invited Fortunately for the occasion, my father was from home; and, as there was no other obstacle in the way, I went. When I arrived, I found nearly the same company as on the former evening. The grave weaver, the dashing beau, and the little bashful *hauflin*, with the four sisters, and the mother, were present. Their father, however, had been called away upon some business of importance; and, as he was not there to spoil, with sage advice or grave restraint, the preconcerted schemes of the younger part of his family, we proceeded immediately to those *charms* upon a trial of which all seemed bent. Our first business was to go to the garden and pull each the first *kail-stock* we happened to lay our hands on. What was the precise fortune of the others I do not now recollect; but the one which I brought in had a smooth, straight, slender stem; and Mary's was middle-sized, with a goodly quantity of earth adhering to the root. This was considered a favourable omen. A knife was next procured with which to cut the *castocks*, for the purpose of tasting them;* and when this was done, it was admitted by all that ours was the sweetest. This was considered a still better omen; and, according to the rules supplied by that popular superstition, we were both considered highly fortunate. The concluding part of the augury, however, was still awanting, and we now proceeded to place our *kail-stocks* above the door—it being the general belief, that the Christian names of the next visiters would answer to those of the parties in question, according to the order in which their vegetable representatives had been placed. After some good-natured railing among the sisters, it was agreed, that the "runts" pulled by Mary and me should be honoured with the first place. This being settled, the others were soon arranged in due order. But, scarcely had we taken our seats, when in came a boy and a girl called *Davy* and *Mary Mackintosh*, to tell Mrs Marshall that their father had seen her husband that afternoon, and that he would not be home till the end of the week. My own heart beat violently when I saw the girl, who came in first; and I observed Mary's eye sparkle as it caught a glance of the boy. In our case, everything was favourable, and the others immediately began to regard us with knowing looks. Three small wooden dishes were next ranged on the hearth. One was filled with clean water, another with dirty water, the third was left empty, and, after being blindfolded, it was agreed that I should try my fortune first. Three times the experiment was repeated, and as often I took up the vessel which contained the clean water. This was considered a certain prognostic that I should be married, and that I should marry a maid—not a widow. Mary followed: there was an evident flutter of anticipation and apprehension in her manner, as I tied the handkerchief over her eyes; and her hand trembled as she stretched it out in search of the little wooden dispensers of fate. She too was fortunate; thrice she got the *clean water*, and thrice an involuntary titter bespoke that feeling of happiness which was too powerful to be wholly suppressed—alas, for the impotency of such auguries. The burning of the *nuts* immediately followed. In the preceding operations no direct allusion to the parties in question had been necessary; but here, to give efficacy to the charm, the name of both *lad* and *lass* had to be mentioned, as their respective nuts were put into the fire. In Mary's disposition there appeared to be a degree of bashfulness, which shrunk from such an open acknowledgment; and though, by her interference, I had always been first in what went before, she now allowed the others to take the lead, without saying a word. It is even probable that both her and me might have suffered the opportunity to pass altogether, had it not been for her mother.

"Now, when you're a' through," said the latter, "what might hinder you to *burn Davy and Mary thegither*. Puir thing, she's sittin back i' the corner her lane yonder—she's never been hersel since she was sae near drowned i' the loch; and I fear she's takin some ill turn again."

This drew all eyes toward her, and mine among the rest. I had been so busy looking at the *cases* which were trying in the fire with various success, that I did not notice her retire. At any other time, the oddity of her mother's observation, about *burning her and me together*, taken in its

* See "Burns' Poems."—Notes to "Halloween."

literal sense, might have made me laugh; but a change had now come over her, which chased all laughter from my heart. Around her lips, which were paler than their usual, there was the same expression of languor which I had seen before, but more marked. The whole of the red in her face seemed gathered into a narrow compass upon either cheek, the edges of which displayed a light tinge, like that which colours the leaves of the rose called *maiden blush*, but gradually deepening, till in the centre it amounted to a bright crimson. Her large, soft, hazel eyes, glowed with an unwonted fire; their long silken lashes were raised high, so as to shew their full orbs; and, altogether, an unearthly and omenous beauty seemed to have taken possession of her countenance.

"I doubt something's the matter wi' ye, lassie," said her mother, after looking attentively in her face; and the same doubt was immediately expressed by the whole of her sisters.

At this, however, Mary laughed, assuring them, at the same time, that she was "quite well;" and to confirm what she said, she rose and again joined the circle around the hearth. Two *nuts* were now placed in the fire, and her name and mine were mentioned as the individuals whom they represented. For a time they burned clear and bright together, sending up a united flame; but long before they were half consumed, the fire at once gave way, and the nut which represented her, fell under the grate and was suddenly quenched among the ashes. On farther examination, that which bore my name was discovered broken into fragments, and smoldering and consuming by slow degrees. All agreed, however, that these evil omens were wholly attributable to the fire having given way, and, consequently, not to be regarded as such. And, as we did not think of trying those solitary *spells* in which spectral illusions are expected to appear and foretell future events, our next business was *ducking for apples*. A *tub*, previously filled with water for the purpose, was produced; an apple was thrown in, and him or her who could take it out with their teeth, was to have it for their pains. The little lad and the beau had tried and failed, Jane and Ann had made the attempt with no better success, and I was about to follow their example when Mary stepped forward, and, throwing aside her neckerchief and taking the comb from her hair, she bade me, with a smile, "let her try"—determined, as it appeared, to falsify her mother's apprehensions for her health, and, to prove that she was as familiar with cold water, and feared it as little as any in the house, she placed her mouth upon the apple, pressed it downward to the very bottom, and seizing it there, brought it out and held it up in triumph—her bare bosom glistening, and her long hair streaming the while with water. The experiment was repeated round and round a number of times; but none of us could compete with Mary, who appeared as fearless, and managed matters as deliberately as if the water had been her own element. Her success, and that consciousness of superiority which she evidently felt, flushed her cheek with a brighter colour, and added to all her other charms; while I, heedless of my own fame as a diver, stood gazing upon her light inspired form, in an ecstasy of feeling which can scarcely be described. On that night I had determined to declare myself her lover, if I could find an opportunity, and to declare too that nothing on earth should ever separate my fortune from hers, if she would only consent to trust me with her happiness. Let not the reader marvel at such a determination in a lad of seventeen: there is a precocity of *feeling*, as well as a precocity of *genius;* and I, it seems, had been early embued with that deep and abiding passion. Our merriment and glee, however, was still at its height, when Katty Allan, accompanied by the *herd-laddie*, "to keep the bogles from her," as she said, came running in to tell me that my father had returned, and wished to see me immediately." With a thrilling sense of disappointment I bade the rest of the company good night. but, as I shook hands with Mary, my heart foreboded something; and to her I felt as if I should have said *farewell;* but the words were choking in my throat, and, without uttering another syllable, I followed Katty to the door.

When I got home, my father did not, as I had expected, upbraid me with my absence, and insist on knowing the cause of it: on the contrary, he seemed to take no notice of my confusion; but began to tell me, in calm, clear, distinct tones, that he had been, for some time past, using all his influence with a friend in London to procure me a situation in the service of the East India Company—that he had, during his late journey, received a letter from his friend, informing him of the situation being now open, and that my utmost expedition would be necessary in making preparations for my departure, as I must go off on the day after to-morrow. To me his words were an earthquake which at once shook down all those castles I had been busy building in the air. But what could I do? Had I been a year or two older, perhaps I might have disputed his authority, and claimed the privilege of disposing of myself; but, hitherto, I had been accustomed to implicit obedience, and I knew not how to disobey.

My little preparations were soon made; and on the evening of the following day, when it grew dark, I took my pocket Bible, upon a blank leaf of which I had previously written the words, *Mary Marshall*, under my own name, and hastened to Denhead to take a long farewell of my friends there. I opened the door for myself, and walked in without any ceremony; but before I could salute them, Mrs Marshall made a sign for me to be silent; then rising to receive me, she pointed to an empty chair—the one which Mary usually occupied—and I took possession of it without speaking. I was now told in whispers, that in less than an hour after I left them, Mary began to complain of noise in her ears and pain in her head. Symptoms of very severe cold were soon evident, and these were followed by fever, the common accompaniment of such cases. During the night, she had slept none; toward morning she had spoken rather incoherently, and she was now lying seriously ill in the other end of the house.

"We heard this forenoon, continued her mother, "that you are going off to India directly; but this we have kept a secret; for, were she to hear it in her present distressed state, puir thing, I fear it would break her heart, an' we might soon get her to bury. I can guess your errand," she added, after wipping away a tear, and looking me full in the face as she spoke; "I can guess your errand; but if ye hae ony regard for her faither an' her mither, or ony affection for hersel, I conjure you not to think of seeing her the nicht."

I would have spoken, but my heart was too full to allow one word to escape. Mrs Marshall seemed to understand the state of my feelings, and, perhaps, not altogether unwilling to take advantage of them.

"Ah, Davy, Davy," she continued, "I fear she'll think on you lang, lang after ye've forgotten her. But if ye hae ony little keepsake that ye wad like to leave, or onything that ye wad like to say, ye may intrust it to me as ye wad do to your best friend."

I drew the Bible from my pocket—it was the only thing I had on earth which I could offer—and, opening it at the place where our names were written, I held it out to her.

"That's a guid lad, indeed," said she. "May neither her nor you ever lack the comfort contained in that book. And noo," she continued, her voice faltering with kind emotion, "though it may look ill in me, I maun e'en advise ye no to stay owre lang the nicht. Your comin here is maybe the cause o' your gaun awa—at least the fo'k says sae—an' if ye were to offend your faither again, wha kens what micht be the consequences."

My heart acknowledged the justness of this observation. I rose, said something about never forgetting them, shook hands with the sisters, trying to articulate the words *farewell, Helen—farewell, Jane*—and *farewell, Ann:* it was all I could say. Each shed a tear as she dropped my hand, and they all rose to follow me; but their mother made a sign for them to sit down again, while she herself accompanied me out. When we were beyond hearing—

"Davy," said she, "ye're gaun far, far frae hame, an' God alone kens what may happen afore ye come back, or what ye may hae to encounter; but mind what the guidman said to you on the *maiden nicht*, an' *never despair*. Though I'm auld noo, I was aince young—I ken the trials that young fo'k meet wi'; an' I ken too that young fo'k's minds are subject to a hantle changes, an' that Mary, puir thing, is nae match for you. But for a' that, ye may maybe come back an' marry her, an' maybe no; but in this, as in every ither thing, I maun just say, *the Lord's will be done*. He only kens if ever I may see you again, an' that gars me speak mair freely. Ye may forget baith her an' me; but if I'm no far mista'en, she'll no soon forget you. And noo there's my hand in token, that whaurever your lot be cast, ye'll never want a warm friend in Jennet Marshall, as lang as she lives."

I endeavoured to thank the kind matron for her advice and care over me; but must have failed, I suppose, for she pressing my hand, said "she knew what I would say if I could speak," gave me an encouraging clap upon the shoulder, and, "wishing that God might be my guide," bade me "farewell."

I did not, however, immediately return home. A thought had struck me while in the house. I could not leave the place without seeing Mary once more. The apartment where she lay was lighted from a back window, where I was not likely to be discovered; and there I took my stand, to wait till some one should enter the room with a light. Her mother soon came to inquire "how she was?" and then I saw her raise herself upon her elbow, and pass her hand across her brow. I saw the flush of fever on her cheek, and its fire in her eye. I heard her try her voice; but it was not till the second or third attempt that she could articulate; and then, instead of answering her mother's question—

"Has Davy been here the nicht?" said she.

"What gars ye speer that, lassie?" again inquired the other, evidently wishing to avoid an explanation.

"I thought I heard his foot gang past the end of the house!" was her reply; "an' I'm maist sure he's been here, whether he cam in or no."

"Ye've surely been dreamin, lassie," said her mother; "what difference can there be between *his* foot and ony ither body's?"

"There's juist that difference," rejoined she, "that I would ken *it* among a hunder."

I could hear no more. These words had melted my heart; and, stepping back a little, I shed a flood of tears—the first I had shed since I was a mere boy; and with one exception, which yet remains to be mentioned, they were the last. For hours after the light was gone, I stood there on a dark, stormy, winter night, listening to try if I could hear her oppressed breathing—a vain effort amidst the howling of the wind, and the rattling of the rain. How I left the place, or how I got home, I cannot tell, but next morning I was on my way to the coast.

When I arrived in India, I was appointed to a station on the very outskirts of the British territory; and thither I repaired, or rather was forced to repair, with all possible speed. I had been here only about four or five days, and had retired behind a rising ground, that I might be free from all annoyance while writing a letter, which I meant to dispatch homewards with the first opportunity. But, instead of proceeding immediately to the business in hand, I sat down upon a grassy bank, and leaning my head upon the stump of a tree, I began to indulge in a long train of tender recollections. My home, my early haunts, and, above all, the parting scene at Denhead, were still too fresh in my memory to be easily dismissed; and there I sat, pondering over them till the moon had superseded the sun. In this state of inactivity I was suddenly surrounded, seized, manacled, and made a prisoner by a marauding party, who carried me far into the interior of the country, and then sold me to another party, who carried me still farther. In the course of a month, I was sold and exchanged, and sold again, I know not how often; and, at every remove, as I was led to suppose, carried farther and farther back, till in the end I scarcely knew from what quarter I had come. Wearied out and broken down by travelling, hunger, thirst, and nakedness, I found myself at last settled as a slave on the property of an Indian miser, at a distance of I knew not how many hundred miles from the precincts of the British territory.

In this state of hopeless captivity, my existence was as miserable as anything which can well be conceived. Oftener than once the thought occurred that it were better *not to be* than *to be thus;* and then the gloomy determination to rid myself of a life which had nothing left to render it desirable, rose in my mind and began to acquire a fearful ascendancy over me; but as often as this thought occurred, it was followed by the words of Robert Marshall—"Take no hazardous step till you have considered *all its consequences*." Again I seemed to sit under his roof, with Mary smiling by my side, and to hear him saying "never despair." Again Mary's mother seemed to whisper in my ear, "maybe ye may come back and marry her;" and again I resolved to stem the torrent of misery with which I was surrounded. She was indeed ill when I left her, but if I could trust to the spells of *Halloween*—and wherefore not trust what every one else trusted?—if I should live she must yet be my wife. Time somewhat reconciled me to my situation through ten years of captivity and suffering.

At the end of this period I accompanied my master with a quantity of merchandise which he was to dispose of into a distant part of the country. He had accomplished his business, and, late in the evening, we had commenced our return, heavily laden with some articles of European manufacture, when we were overtaken by a party of British soldiers.

As soon as I was my own master, I lost no time in writing to Scotland. But to these letters, after the usual period had elapsed, I received no answer. I still comforted myself, however, with the idea, that my friends had either removed to a different part of the country, and thus missed the communication intended for them, or that my packet had miscarried and been lost. My object was now to pick up a little money, with which to return home as soon as possible; and, had I adopted the course which I saw others adopting, I might have soon made myself rich; but I endeavoured to be honest, and my acquisitions were consequently slow. In about four years, however, I had made myself master of several thousands; and with these I embarked for my own country, expecting to find my friends ready to receive me with open arms. But, alas! I had forgotten that *fourteen years* had elapsed since I left that country. In the home of my nativity I found strangers; and in that house where I had spent the happiest moments of my life, a man who knew nothing of Robert Marshall or his family, save that the former was dead, and the latter had left the place ten years ago.

My father, I was given to understand, had been dead for more than eight years. He had died in the belief that I was dead before him; but not till he had taken the pro-

per steps for securing his money and effects to me in case I should ever be discovered. These I found in the hands of *trustees*, and I had little difficulty in getting possession of them. But something was still awanting to give them value in my eyes, and that was some one with whom I could share them, and to whom I could tell what I had suffered.

After a painful search and many vain inquiries, I at last discovered Helen Marshall at a distance of more than fifty miles from Denhead, and from her I learned the first particulars of my early friends. She had herself married the little lad, whom I had seen oftener than once at her father's cottage, and, after several changes of situation, they had at last removed to the little farm where I found them. The place was their own; upon it they had lived for a number of years, happily and comfortably, always paying their rent when it became due; and in the interval she had given birth to four children. But, lately, her husband had got the joint of one of his knees so shattered by a kick from a horse, that he had little hope of ever being able again to follow his work, and as the produce of the place would not suffice to pay the rent and keep a servant, they had the prospect of being soon forced to leave it.

Jane had never been very warmly attached to her gay lover, though, in the absence of more engaging suitors, she gave him a sort of distant encouragement. But, as the moth often amuses itself with the candle till it is singed, she was at last persuaded to marry him; and after living together for three years—during which period she was far from being happy—he ran off with another woman. When he left her, she had one child to provide for, and was about to be made the mother of a second; and these circumstances preyed so deeply upon her spirits, that she never recovered from her confinement, but fell into ill health, and died soon after, leaving her two children to the care of their aunt, who, with her clouded prospects, had now too many of her own.

Ann had heartily hated her grave suitor for several years, and had resisted all his advances with a firmness which would have driven any other man to despair. He, however, persisted, and at last, through the persuasion of her mother—who had always entertained a high opinion of him—she was induced to give him her hand. But no sooner were they married than he began to show a disposition to take vengeance on her for the disrespect with which she had formerly treated him. Suspected, upbraided, and abused in several other ways for a number of years, she had borne all patiently; but at last, his society became unendurable; she was compelled to leave his house; and as none of her friends—of whom she had but few—durst take her in, she was now a sort of outcast, living in the greatest poverty.—Such is, briefly, the story of three of the sisters; but one yet remains, and that too must be told.

According to Helen's account, both Mary and Jane had determined to present me with a chaplet of favourite flowers on my birthday, which was on the 10th of August; and they had both been eagerly looking for a water-lily, with which to crown their respective gifts, when Mary discovered that which gave rise to the boat adventure. Previous to this, some little bickerings had occurred between them, which occasionally drew forth the admonitions of their mother; but after the accident, and Mary's subsequent illness, Jane, who seemed to consider herself as in some measure the cause of both, was ever ready to yield to her younger sister. Mary, on the other hand, appeared perfectly sensible of her condescension, and while she strove to make the best return in her power, their mother was sometimes induced to remark that "it had been better for a' the folk about the house if she had only been *doukit* when she was a bairn. But, why should I dwell upon such trifles? and yet there is a tendency in the mind of man to do so when sorrow lies behind.

The circumstance of my having gone to India was carefully concealed from her till she was a little better, and then it was communicated by degrees. When the truth was told. she appeared deeply affected, but said little; and for several months after, she made no allusion to the subject. Throughout the winter and spring, she continued in very delicate health, and at intervals her eye and cheek exhibited the same hectic symptoms which had awakened her mother's fears on *Halloween*. As summer advanced, she got a little better; and then it was her custom, when the day was fine, to take the Bible which I had left her and wander down to the loch, and sit by the hazel bush, or upon the old sluice, and read and meditate for hours alone. In the early part of the month of August, she was so well as to express a wish to go to church; and though her parents were still apprehensive for her health, they did not interfere to prevent her. During the interval of public worship, she drew her sister aside to the family burying-place, and after looking in silence at the graves for a considerable time, "where," she inquired, "would Mr S——'s family be buried if any of them were to die?"

"Not here," was the answer; "their burying-place is in the churchyard of C——."

At this announcement, she burst into tears, and, as she attempted to dry them—"No matter," she ejaculated, "it was a foolish thought. But though we cannot lie in the same churchyard—perhaps not in the same quarter of the globe—I may yet meet him in heaven."

After this, she made no secret either of her affection or her approaching fate. Those subjects on which, before, she was so unwilling to speak, seemed to have become all at once familiar to her. Consumption had laid its deadly fangs upon a vital organ, and as the season advanced, she grew rapidly worse. On the forenoon of *Hallowday*, the sun shone with uncommon splendour for the advanced season; the winds were asleep; and the air was so warm and mild, that—but for the faded verdure of the scene—it might have been mistaken for a day in early summer. On this forenoon, she was by her own request carried round to a small bank, from which she had a full view of the loch; and, after gazing upon its placid waters for a time, during which her countenance underwent several rapid changes, she bade them bring her Bible. Her request was instantly complied with; and, when she had turned over the leaves for some seconds as if in search of some particular passage—"Dear me," she said, "how soon it grows dark to night—I cannot find his name. But no, I must not think of him just now." Her hands were then still; her lips moved as if in prayer, but no sound was uttered; and with the next minute—which fled the spirit of Mary Marshall—took its flight, to realms, I trust, where the best affections, and the most angelic natures are not doomed to perpetual blight, as is too often the case here.

As Helen concluded her simple story, the recollection of a beloved sister, who had survived fourteen years of chance and change, made her weep; and I, too, shed tears.

All I have to tell is told. Since then I have collected the scattered remains of my early friends into a little group. I pass my days amongst them, endeavouring to make them comfortable, if not happy; and in due time I expect to sleep by the side of Mary Marshall.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

LOVE'S YOUNG DREAM

"Oh! the days are gone when beauty bright,
My heart's chain wove."—*Moore.*

It was a beautiful evening in May—the zephyrs played among the leaves, just stirring them with their wings, and from the scented earth rose up the aroma of a thousand flowers blending harmoniously in one sweet fragrance. A fainting shower had fallen in the afternoon, adding a new charm to the pleasant odours of the garden. All was beauty, all was joy.

Within a bower there sat young Edmund Wilson, his arm encircling the waist of the pretty Agnes Taylor, while her head in turn reclined upon his shoulder. They had "kept company" for several years, and all the village looked on them as married people. She was a bright and lovely girl of seventeen; he, a tolerably handsome youth of two-and-twenty. It was in her father's garden that they were; for the old man was wealthy enough to possess a house and garden of his own, bought from the savings of a pretty long youth of labour; and therein had he settled with his family, to enjoy an age of ease. Agnes was now all that remained to him. His wife had died shortly after coming to that house, and his two sons and three daughters went forth into the wide world to seek a competence for themselves. The daughters had at length contrived, one after another, to get married to husbands in pretty comfortable circumstances; for they had charms sufficient to captivate, and intellect and good temper enough for the time being to retain a hold over the hearts of the vanquished. The sons had reached London, and had forced themselves into good situations; and of all the family, Agnes, like the Last Rose of Summer, was

"Left blooming alone."

Edmund Wilson was merely an apprentice to his uncle, a farmer in the neighbourhood, who was by no means a rich man, but just earned the wherewithal to keep up his farm, and support himself and a growing family. Edmund was an orphan, a dependant on his bounty; and the uncle, unlike the generality of uncles, never once murmured thereat. Edmund had a pretty little cousin, daughter of the aforesaid uncle, named Caroline Wellwood, of whom Miss Agnes Taylor used oftentimes to be jealous; but for her, Edmund never once felt more than that pitiful affection which usually exists among cousins, while in Agnes his soul was entirely wrapt. She it was who could call his young heart her own; and many and various were the efforts of the girls of the village to steal it from her, but in vain: Edmund danced with them, Edmund sang to them—and his voice was a sweet one—but his affections remained unaltered.

It was in that identical bower in which they now sat, that Agnes had first confessed her love to Edmund. It was a favourite haunt of their's: the honeysuckle twined around its entrance; the mignonette blooming in sweet profusion in the plot before it—most meet for tales of love.

Like most young damoiselles in this most musical age, Agnes Taylor had been taught to strum away upon the pianoforte. Small was the excellence she had attained on that most popular instrument; yet she was sufficiently skilled to play the accompaniment to a song—a task which Edmund Wilson frequently imposed upon her, as he could sing, or fancied he could sing, much better when Agnes was by his side. A favourite air of their's, was one to which Edmund had written words on the occasion of their once parting for a week, the sentiment of which was that, if they did part, he would feel fresh joy when they met again.

How great was the amazement of Edmund Wilson, when, after sitting with Agnes in the pleasant manner already described for nearly two hours, and pouring into her ear the oft-repeated vows of his unfeigned regard, that young lady, till then silent, suddenly disengaged herself from his grasp, and exclaimed, in a tone of voice screwed up to the sticking place in a scrupulously careful manner—"Edmund—I mean Mr Wilson—no more of this I pray you. I must not listen to your vows; my father has forbidden me. Here, on this spot we must part for ever."

"Agnes!" cried Edmund, starting to his feet—(She had performed that movement herself ere she spoke)—"Agnes! what—what means this? Tell me, I besecch you, wherein I have erred, wherein I have displeased your father? alas! I"——

"No more," said Agnes, quite collectedly. "It is my father's will; and I, unhappy girl, must obey. My fortune is two thousand pounds, and yours is"——

"Nothing!" continued Edmund; "true, it *is* nothing; but let me not be thought mercenary even by your father. Agnes! I will forth into the world; I will pursue with enthusiasm the path that leads to honour and to wealth. I will gain fame, I will gain riches; and both, both shall be for the sake of my dear Agnes. Yes, Agnes will be the cheering star to light me on my way—the name of Agnes will be enshrined in the facry fane of this my ever constant heart; and should my energies, for one short moment, dare unconsciously to relax, that name will start from out its shrine and urge me on again. Agnes! farewell, but not forever. I will return here, at some no very distant day, to claim you for my bride, when all the wealth your father may inherit will be but as a feather in the scale compared to mine. Swear then, Agnes, to be mine alone."

"I swear," said Agnes, deeply affected, "never to unite myself with any other but yourself, though I should wait for you till the day of doom."

"Yet stay, dear Edmund," she continued, after a short pause, "I will this very moment be your own. I will disobey my father's orders, and throw myself and my fortune at your feet."

"Nay, nay, rash girl; this must not be. I would not that a father's curse should cling to me and mine, which such an act as this would justify. No, Agnes! I wooed you honourably, and I will wed you so. Farewell! till we meet again. God bless you."

Edmund Wilson pressed her to his heart, imprinted a kiss upon her throbbing brow, and tore himself away from scenes endeared yet hateful to him. Agnes fainting, sunk down upon the garden seat.

Eighteen years glided quickly past, and Edmund Wilson

stood again within his native village, much altered both in personal appearance and in pecuniary condition. The sun of Italy had shone upon him, tinting his healthful cheek with a slight bronze; his hair was darker, and the slender frame of the youth was now expanded into that of the full grown man. He wore a slight mustache upon his upper lip, in token of his having been smitten with foreign example. His manner was considerably improved, from the circumstance of his having mixed in the best society of London and other places; and those who, in former years, had known the lad Edmund Wilson, could not now recognise him in the handsome gentleman before them—so greatly was he changed. All but his heart was changed—that still was true to Agnes.

As a professional singer, he had gained fortune and the world's favour. Yet, amidst the flattering approbation of the greatest and the noblest in the land, his early vows were not forgotten.

The hour at which he returned, a rich man, to the spot he had left with little more than the clothes upon his back, was nearly the same as that on which he had left it; but, instead of the blooming Summer, it was the mellow Autumn.

> "The valley and the village church,
> And the cottage by the brook,"

were just discernible; for it was in the gray twilight hour that he stopped for a moment to gaze on them from a height. With buoyant step did he press onwards to the residence of his beloved Agnes. He passed a couple on the road; and he could not help smiling at the picture of matrimony they presented to his view; and saying to himself—"how different will be the union of myself and Agnes." The man was tall and thin, and he seemed to have been rather excessive, that evening, in his potations; the wife was short and dumpy, and seemed in nowise particular about her toilette, as is, alas! too often the case with ladies after they chance to be married. Edmund stepped aside till they went by.

"You're a good-for-nothing fellow, that you are!" said the wife, with the corner of her apron to her eyes, to induce a belief that she was a most ill-used woman. "For ever in that abominable public-house. I wonder you're not ashamed of yourself—you with a wife and family. Here's an example to set your bairns; I wish I had never married you. I could have got"——

Here her voice died away in the distance; but, it is probable she enumerated, for the thousand and first time in her husband's hearing, the numerous male animals who, in her earlier days, had paid her some slight attentions—the which she was ever fain to construe into an absolute declaration on their parts. The husband, on the occasion in question, seemed inclined to do the wisest thing he could under existing circumstances, viz., to hold his tongue.

A few minutes elapsed, and Edmund Wilson stood within the garden of Agnes' father. He approached the bower in which they had been wont to meet, with, perhaps, some indistinct idea that Agnes *might* be there—sitting, no doubt, as he had left her eighteen years before. The bower was as he had last seen it; he could detect no change. He looked through the interstices, and how he started when he found his dream realized. There sat Agnes gazing on a portrait, which, he had no doubt, was his. A gleam of light, from the rising moon, fell upon her countenance, and gave to it a melancholy sadness. Yes, there was Agnes; and as lovely and blooming as ever. The tide of time appeared to have rolled on without affecting her in the least. To Edmund's fancy, she looked as if she were still sixteen. He stood looking upon her for more than a minute, fearing to disturb her reverie, and agitate her with his sudden presence. Another minute elapsed, and he was just on the point of giving way to impulse, rushing forward, and throwing himself at her feet, but he restrained himself, for he thought he could observe a tear course down her cheek and fall upon the portrait in her hand.

"She is thinking of me," he thought, "and that tear is given to my memory." Again he looked upon the weeping girl, who, kissing the portrait, said—

"I must not thus give way. I will banish all thought of him from this aching heart. There, no one will know of my weeping;" and she dried her eyes as she spoke; but the unbidden tear, despite her efforts, still flowed. She rose and paced the bower.

"What can detain him?" she continued, after some short time. "Why does my Edmund linger? How heavily the time moves on. Oh! this grief of parting. 'Tis strange that the song Edmund loved best to hear was about lovers parting. It comes upon my memory, now, in all its vividness."

In a faltering voice she then broke forth into the following song:—

> "What! part from thee? the very thought
> Already wrings my heart;
> All other ills could vex it not—
> We'll never part!
>
> "Unbidden would the tear drop flow;
> And all the world to me
> Would feel so drear, so cheerless. No!
> It must not be."

"The very song we used to sing together," said Edmund to himself. It struck him, however, that Agnes did not sing it as she used to do. Her voice was not so full and deep-toned as he expected the lapse of years would have made it; it appeared to him more girlish than when he last heard it; and, if he had not seen Agnes herself standing before him, he would have certainly failed to recognise her merely from her voice. This, to him, seemed strange, for he was well aware that time has no power over *it*; there is ever a distinct resemblance between the voice of the boy and the voice of the man, and the same tones are invariably to be detected in the full-grown woman as those she gave utterance to when but a mere girl.

However, when the lady of the bower thus paused for a moment at the end of the second stanza of her song, Edmund discarded as illusory all conflicting ideas respecting her voice—he felt that the time was now come when he could reveal his presence to her with less danger of her taking fright then heretofore, and accordingly went on with the concluding stanza of the song. Thus it was:—

> "And yet, in parting, sorrow's sweet,
> For hope keeps whispering
> The time will come again to meet,
> New joy to bring."

Ere the last note had died upon the breeze, Edmund Wilson stood within the bower, supporting the astonished and half-fainting maiden on his shoulder.

"Nay, nay, my own one," he said, "be not thus cast down. Cheer up, my Agnes."

At this juncture, a stranger youth stood on the threshold of the bower, and gazed on the pair with an agonized look. Edmund Wilson observed him not until, after the space of a few minutes, he spoke.

"And is it come to this?" he cried. "Oh! perjured woman, I thought thee mine alone; but thus to find thee at the very hour appointed for our meeting—perhaps the last we e'er were doomed to see—enfolded in the arms of another. Oh! 'tis cruel, very cruel!"

Edmund Wilson was struck dumb with amazement, when, after hearing his beloved Agnes thus addressed, the lady herself indignantly rushed from his embrace, and threw herself at the feet of the stranger, who had turned to depart.

"Hear me!" she exclaimed, catching hold of his garments. "Edmund Masterton, hear me. Judge not harshly of me;

do not, I entreat you. You are deceived; this gentleman will"——

"I *am* deceived," pursued Edmund Masterton; "but I will be so no longer. Here, take back the only gift I ever reverenced, and which I've worn next to this blighted heart for but one little year; I would not keep it lest it should call to mind how happily that year was passed. The gossip's tale, which once I doubted, is now proved true, that those fond beings who *give* a lock of their own hair to one another, are doomed never to be united." As he said this, he drew forth a lock of hair and flung it on the ground.

"What madness is this, Edmund Masterton?" said the weeping girl, rising to her full height. "You wrong me, indeed you do, and the time will come, perhaps, when you will find it so."

"Can I not give credence to mine eyes? Away! minion." And he pushed her rudely from him, and hastily quitted the bower.

"Oh, sir!" said the girl, turning to Edmund Wilson, who, during this scene, had stood riveted to the spot on which he had first stationed himself, not daring to interfere, yet conscious he ought to do so. Intense astonishment had completely overcome him. "Oh, sir! whoe'er you be, you cannot surely lack all sense of generosity. You alone can save us both. Call Edmund back and explain to him how you came here—reason with him—prove to him that our meeting was accidental. Oh, sir! you do not know what it is to love, to be deeply, devotedly attached to one being on whom your very life depends."

She would have proceeded further, had not Edmund Wilson interrupted her; for now he stood by her side, now listened more attentively to the sound of her voice, heard her declare her love for the youth who had just left them, and failed to recognise himself as an old friend, the conviction that she was *not* his Agnes flashed terribly on his soul. So like too in feature what his Agnes was, but then so young. Agnes *must* look older than the girl before him, notwithstanding his imagination pictured otherwise, and his wish disputed not with his imagination. Her very height too, and form; all was to him an inexplicable mystery.

"Your name is Agnes?" he falteringly inquired.

"It is!" she answered, and expiring hope began once more to flutter in his heart.

"Taylor?"

"No; Dickson!" His hopes died. She continued:—"My mother's name was Agnes Taylor!"

"Your mother. This, then, accounts for the resemblance between you and her whose heart I thought to have still found my own. Married! Agnes Taylor married! This, this is too much to bear." The poor man buried his face in his hands, and groaned heavily. Tears came to his relief—tears filled those eyes to which, for many, many years, they had been strangers—and after some moments he became more composed. "How old are you, my pretty one?" he inquired of Agnes Dickson.

"I'll be seventeen in April!"

"What! scarcely two years passed from the time I left this village, and she *married!* Fool that I have been, to cherish hopes that whispered otherwise! My letters—this explains why they were never answered. Girl," he said, addressing Agnes, "a little while ago you told me that I did not know what it was to love. Alas! I have known too well; and love has read me a most bitter lesson. But, I yet may triumph over her who has thus trifled with my affections. That young man who was here but now. Do you love him?

"Oh, that I do!"

"And he reciprocates?"

"Until this night we never had an angry word; he did everything in his power to please me; and he has often vowed never to become another's. We were to have met to-night, to say farewell for a short time, for he is going into a distant part of the country to endeavour to better his circumstances, which, saving your presence, sir, are nothing of the best; and it was on my account that he was thus about to exile himself; for my mother will not consent to my marriage with any one who has not a sum equal to that she intends giving me as a portion."

"Hem!—your mother!" muttered Edmund Wilson; "and pray, my dear, of what amount may that proposed sum be?"

"Five hundred pounds, sir; and I'm sure I don't know how Edmund Masterton will ever make it up."

"Do not despair, my pretty Agnes. Hasten home as quickly as possible, and, by ten to-morrow, you may expect to see me again, with news which will make your little heart leap for joy."

"But Edmund Masterton."——

"All shall be explained to him. Keep your mind easy, my good girl. Farewell!" He kissed her forehead, pressed her hand warmly, and they separated; she, to seek her pillow, and enjoy that repose which she stood much in need of; and he to obtain, if possible, an interview with Edmund Masterton.

* * * * * *

"Hoity-toity!—is there anything the matter with the girl, that she lies so long a-bed in a fine sunshiny morning like this, and a lover come to woo her too. Get up, lazy-bones, do!" Such were the words of Mrs Dickson, the *ci-devant* pretty Agnes Taylor, on entering her daughter's room, the morning after the events just related.

"What's the matter, mother?" inquired Agnes, waking up.

"Matter enow!" was the reply. "There's Jonathan Snapdragon, the retired collector of poor-rates, that everybody knows is rolling in wealth, waiting in the parlour to see you."

"To see me!—I don't know the man."

"Oh, that's nothing; you'll know him better by and by. He's come to ask you in marriage, and I have given him my consent."

"What! marriage!" faintly ejaculated Agnes. "Mother, do you wish to break my heart?"

"Break your heart, indeed!—no, no, it won't break in such a hurry, depend on it. What though Jonathan is a man well up in years—that's no great matter, so that he has the cash. He's better than all the young upstarts in the countryside put together. So make yourself ready, as fast as possible, and come away down to him. Girls like you should have no choice in affairs of this kind. If *I* had followed my own inclination instead of my father's, I would have been the wife of a strolling musician, and the mother of half-a-dozen little half-starved brats, perhaps, instead of being the owner of this house, that my father left me for taking his advice, and marrying a man that was once well to do in the world, and over whom I could have the complete command. He's a stupid, drunken, old idiot now, to be sure; but, when I condescended to throw myself away upon him, he was a well enough looking fellow, and he had made money in the leather trade. Thank heaven I took care of his money for him, or where would it have been now, I wonder?—all spent in ale. Come, now, there's a good girl; get yourself ready; while I go and tel Jonathan you'll be with him in a few minutes." And away she bundled out of the room, as fast as she could waddle; for, be it known, Mrs Dickson rather inclined to the obese.

A short time after this, in compliance with her mother's desire, Agnes appeared in the parlour, and was introduced to the retired collector of poor-rates—a little, old, shrivelled man of seventy-five, with spindle shanks, knee breeches, an embroidered waistcoat with depending pockets, a snuff-

coloured broad-tailed coat, chitterlins, large feet enshrined in large shoes adorned with massive buckles, a scratch wig, a smooth walking-stick, and a cough.

"Happy to see you looking so bonny this morning, miss," he at length found confidence and breath enough to say. "It's a pity you lie so long in bed, though; I hope this won't be the case when you're Mrs Snapdragon;" and, as he said this, he chuckled, and winked to Agnes' mother, to induce a belief, on that lady's part, that he had said a very clever thing.

"I trust that time will never come!" said Agnes, in a calm tone of voice.

"But it shall come—it must come!" cried her mother and the collector in one breath.

"Father, I appeal to you," pursued Agnes, addressing the only other person in the room, "whether"——

"Let him offer to say a word in your behalf," observed Mrs Dickson, menacingly, "and he knows what will be his reward."

The cowed husband cast a melancholy glance towards his daughter, shook his head, as much as to say, "you see I can do nothing," and slunk into the farthest corner of the apartment, as if with an intent to escape at the very first opening of the door.

"Mother!" said Agnes, rising from the chair whereon she had thrown herself on her first entrance, "if you are determined on this point, so am I; I will not give my hand but where my heart goes with it, and that has long since been disposed of."

"To whom, I should like to know?" inquired Mrs Dickson.

"To one with whom she never will break faith, as her mother did with him to whom *she* pledged her earliest love!" said Edmund Wilson, as he coolly entered the apartment, and stood in the centre of the astonished group, confronting the woman who had slighted him, and whom he recognised as the same he had passed on the road the preceding evening, while in the act of administering a wholesome lecture to her husband.

"And what fellow are you, who dare thus enter *my* house in this impertinent manner?" Mrs Dickson asked.

"One whom you have long since forgotten—Edmund Wilson!—and who now comes to claim the fulfilment of your daughter's promise to one who would be completely wretched without her. Ho! come forth!"

Edmund Masterton answered to this summons, and he and Agnes Dickson were speedily locked in each other's close embrace; she being as ready to pardon him for his jealous fit, as he was anxious to obtain it.

"What!" said Mrs Dickson, recovering her pristine equanimity, which the sudden appearance of Edmund Wilson had slightly deranged, "allow *my* daughter to marry a fellow who has not one shilling to rub against another—no, I thank you. Agnes has better expectations than that!"

"This *fellow*, as you call him," answered Edmund Wilson, with some degree of pride, "is the son of my pretty little cousin that once was Caroline Wellwood; and, if my own heart did not dictate it, gratitude to his grandfather for kindness shewn to me when a boy, would surely urge me to promote the happiness of my namesake here—Edmund Masterson. Nay, hear me. On the day that sees him united to Agnes Dickson, I will freely place within his power a sum double that which you intend shall be your daughter's portion. This, madam, is my revenge for the irreparable wrong you have done me—to make your daughter happy in opposition to your desire."

"Oh, if that's the case," said the complaisant mamma, pretending not to have heard the latter part of his speech, "I'm sure *I* shall be the last person in the world to control my daughter's natural affections."

If an additional circumstance were wanting to make Edmund Wilson resigned to his fate, and cause him to thank his stars at his escape from a union with one with whom he now felt he could never have been happy, it was this display of thorough worldliness. Had any one told him, on that very evening when the romantic Agnes Taylor vowed eternal constancy to him, that eighteen years afterwards, on his return to fulfil the vows he had plighted, and to call on her for the fulfilment of hers, he would find her the wife of a far inferior being to himself, the mother of a daughter whose young affection she wished to nip in the bud—in her exercise of that very same sort of tyranny which her father had exercised towards herself, and to escape which she had offered to fly with her lover, though he was penniless at the time—a termagant, a slattern, a low worldly-minded woman—in short, a completely changed and degraded being, from the thing he then imagined her to be—he would not have believed it.

And this was the reward of all his toil and labour!—

"Frailty, thy name is woman!"

The after-life of Edmund Wilson was spent in the south of France, in endeavouring, by every means in his power, to promote the happiness of his fellow-creatures. He died a bachelor, at the age of sixty-two, leaving the bulk of his fortune—which time had made pretty considerable—to the offspring of Agnes Dickson and Edmund Masterton.

The ladymother, the incomparable Mrs Dickson herself, outlived her husband only by one year. The more malicious of her neighbours affirmed that her death was occasioned purely by the want of exercise to her tongue, that member having grown into disuse after the demise of her husband, as not a soul would live in the same house with her, even for hire, so great was their terror of that formidable weapon—a woman's tongue.

Mr Jonathan Snapdragon, feeling rather disappointed in not obtaining Agnes for a wife, took his stick in his hand and walked deliberately towards the brook, which winds along the outskirts of the village; and having divested himself of his outward garments, he marched boldly into the water, with the determined purpose of drowning himself; but being afraid of catching cold and rheumatism while in the act, he took a second thought and marched out again. He was never himself after these events, for he often did that which he never had been in the habit of doing before, viz.—gave away money in charity; and a stout blowsy wench, who filled the office of his hand-maiden, at length prevailed so far over his constitutional weakness, as to induce him to bring her before the public in the character of Mrs Snapdragon.

COUSIN HENDERSON; OR, A RELATION FROM ABROAD.

"All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players."—*Shakspeare.*

"How disagreeable you are, Mr Maxton!" said the better-half of that gentleman, as they sat at breakfast one day about eleven o'clock—no uncommon occurrence with them. "How disagreeable you are, always reminding me of those sums I have lost at play. You forget the days when I win."

"But you should never lose, madam!" was Mr Maxton's sensible observation.

"Come, come," said the lady, coaxingly, "you will run no risk in advancing me a hundred to-day. I'll play with Lady Ramfoozle; she is the most foolish creature possible. Give me a hundred, I say, and I'll engage to win a thousand."

"Well, well," said the complying husband; "but

choose your adversaries. Have nothing to do with your prudent and attentive people, who observe every card; let your party consist of the giddy and the foolish—they are the best players for you."

"Oh, leave me alone!"

"But, madam, it is high time to reprimand you seriously for your other extravagances."

"My dear sir," answered Mrs Maxton, "how often must I repeat to you, that the only thing that could possibly induce me to marry you, was to get rid of the ennui that troubled me singly."

"Madam, I don't wish to deprive you of any of the privileges due to a married woman. Run here, run there, invite to your house whom you please, but only have some mercy upon my purse."

Mr Maxton, who has thus unceremoniously been thrust on the reader's attention, was the proprietor of an extensive mercantile establishment in Glasgow, to which he paid as little attention as it is the fashion for men of fashion to do—that is, he seldom looked near his warehouse, but entrusted the entire management of his affairs to his chief clerk, who, as is usual on like occasions, was daily enriching himself at his master's expense. The business was consequently going to wreck and ruin; and Mr Maxton was just let into a sufficient knowledge of his affairs, at this time, for him to comprehend that he was on the verge of bankruptcy. Yet still he went on in his fashionable career. He kept his town house, and his country house, his horses, and his dogs, gave balls, routes, and parties innumerable; and, in short, did everything in his power to dissipate, as quickly as he could, the small part of his property which yet remained. All this grand style of living he had imbibed, from seeing it carried on by his wife's father—a man who had given his daughters an education far beyond what they were entitled to, and brought them up in a manner which adapted them only as wives for men of fortune; and the result of which was, as might be anticipated, he died a bankrupt. It was a piece of good luck, therefore, when he got hold of Mr Maxton, the son of the steadiest merchant on 'Change, as a husband for his daughter, Florence. The old merchant himself was just dead, and his son had come in for the greater share of his fortune. The residue was left to a daughter, who had married a man named Bernard, for a number of years one of the most faithful clerks in the old gentleman's counting-house, and whom she knew to be a good and amiable man. But, as it often happens, the best servants are the worst masters; and this truth she found when her husband, embarking in business on his own account with her money, met with such losses, that he shortly died of a broken heart, leaving her with two children, and with nothing almost to keep them in life. As this marriage had been gone into with the entire disapprobation of her brother, Mrs Bernard knew that it was almost useless to apply to him for relief. She once attempted it, and met with a refusal. Indeed, Mrs Maxton was so rude to her, that she resolved rather to starve than again apply for assistance where she expected and could find it not.

The only other relation of Mr Maxton in life, was a cousin, who, twenty years before, had gone to seek his fortune in America. Mr Maxton, however, was not quite sure whether he was still living, as he had not heard from him for a number of years; nay, when he began to give the matter due consideration, he was certain that his cousin must be dead, as, being poor when he left England, he had never solicited any favour from Mr Maxton. How greatly was he surprised, therefore, on the very day on which he and his wife sat at breakfast, as before mentioned, when a servant entered the room, immediately after the tea things had been removed, and announced that "a man wished to speak with him, who had brought tidings of Mr Henderson," the very cousin of whose death he had so recently assured himself to his own content.

This announcement was quickly followed by the entrance of the man himself. He was meanly attired, and dejected in his look, so that Mr Maxton almost regretted that he had desired such a fellow—bearing the very appearance of one in want of money—to be shewn in.

"Well sir," Mr Maxton at length gained speech enough to say, "what is your business with me?"

"My name is Henderson," answered the man. "I am a near relation of yours."

"I remember, sir," was the rejoinder of Mr Maxton, "having a relation of that name, but I thought him dead long since."

"He lives, sir; and you see him now."

"Sir," replied Mr Maxton, "it is so long since I have seen or indeed heard anything about you, that you can hardly expect I should remember you."

"Yet we were most intimate friends when young," said Henderson, in a tone of voice partaking more of sorrow than of anger.

"Ay, college friends; but, your business?"

"I had amassed in America, with much labour, a small independence, and, having lost a wife and only child, I resolved to return to my native land. The vessel in which I embarked was wrecked, and I alone, of all the crew and passengers, was saved. I have since undergone many hardships; and I came hither merely to implore your benevolence and interest to get me placed in some office."

"I'll give this fellow a crown to get rid of him," said Mr Maxton, apart to his wife.

"You'll do no such thing," she answered. "This is the common cant of all beggars. Dismiss him immediately, and order him never to return. A pretty kind of relation indeed."

"Sir, I can do nothing for you," said Mr Maxton, turning to his cousin; "and so I beg you will excuse me, for I have business to attend to."

"Yet ere I go," said the poor man, "be kind enough to favour me with your sister's address."

"Indeed, it is such a long time since I have seen her, that I forget. My servant, I dare say, can inform you. But you need hardly go there, as she has nothing for herself."

"Forgive my importunities; I am driven indeed to extreme distress; if *you* then could do anything for me do it; I suffer severely."

To this appeal, however, neither Mr nor Mrs Maxton would vouchsafe a satisfactory reply; and the poor man was compelled to leave the house. This he did with the most seeming submission.

Having ascertained the address of Mrs Bernard, he hastened to call upon her, where a quite different reception, from what he had experienced at her brother's hands, met him. Although scarcely earning, by her needlework, sufficient to keep herself and children in existence, Henderson had no sooner mentioned who he was, than she offered to share her pittance with him for such length of time as he was out of employment.

Things remained in this state for several weeks—Henderson was dependant upon the bounty of Mrs Bernard. Deeply impressed as he was with gratitude for her kindness, can it be wondered at that, knowing the goodness of her heart, this sense should have ripened into love. He avowed his passion, and was accepted; and it was agreed that they should be married the moment Henderson got into some sort of employment. A day had only elapsed after this arrangement, and Henderson made known to Mrs Bernard that he had at length obtained a situation; nay more, that he had taken a house, and the clergyman was there waiting to perform the ceremony.

With some little heart-fluttering and agitation, Mrs Bernard donned her best walking gear, and sallied forth with her intended husband.

How great was her astonishment, when, after passing through various streets, Henderson stopped before an elegant mansion in one of the most fashionable squares at the west end of the town. He rang; the door was opened by a livery servant, who led the way in silence to the drawing-room, where a few friends were assembled to witness the marriage ceremony.

"Pardon this deception," said Mr Henderson, seeing Mrs Bernard's surprise. "This house is mine—I am proud to welcome you home. My poverty was assumed only to try my relations, for I know the hope of fortune too often renders the face of man hypocritical, and makes it assume the appearance of benevolence."

Mrs Bernard was quite overpowered by this unexpected stroke of fortune, and she would fain have retired to her humble dwelling again; but Mr Henderson called on her for the fulfilment of her promise, and that very day they were united.

Mr and Mrs Maxton, who had been informed of the design practised against them by their cousin Henderson, went instantly to see him at his residence. They attempted to pass off the whole matter as an excellent joke, and to pretend that they knew him to be what he was from the first. This was too thinly veiled not to be seen through, and he dismissed them from his house in nearly as summarily a manner as they had dismissed him from their's.

Cousin Henderson, and she whom he had chosen as "the partner of his house and heart," lived, like the lovers in fairy tales, to a good old age, happy in seeing around them their children's children. They died within a week of each other. The same grave sufficed to hold their ashes.

Their worthy relation, Mr Maxton, awakening, ere long, to a sense of his approaching ruin, collected all the ready money he could lay his hands on, and, leaving his town house, his country house, his warehouse, and his servants, to the mercy of his creditors, embarked with his wife for New Orleans, where, it is hoped, they found out that most invaluable of all secrets—*The art of living within one's income.*

BOUND OR FREE.

Rosa Easton was her papa's pet. She was allowed to do anything or everything, without the fear of contradiction. Educated at home from her earliest childhood, lacking the careful guardianship of a mother—for Mrs Easton had died in giving birth to her—and her vanity being constantly flattered by her waiting women, it would, indeed, have been remarkable, if Rosa could have been other than a self-willed being. Although not remarkably handsome, she was called a perfect Venus by her flatterers; although possessed of a mind not over well cultivated, she was made to believe that she had the intellect of a Joanna Baillie. As she advanced in years, however, she began to see the folly of all this nonsense; and, betaking herself to the constant study of books, by the time she reached one-and-twenty, there was not a better informed young woman for many miles round. Reading, however, could not entirely subdue those hurtful notions, which had been erewhile implanted in her breast, whence had sprung up self-will, a hasty temper, and a thousand other "ills that flesh is heir to." Had her station been lowly, as it was otherwise, with such headstrong passions, and a heart accessible to flattery, the chances are great that she would have fallen an easy prey to the machinations of the seducer. Even as she was, the undisputed heiress of her father's wealth, she would have been in some danger, had she not fortunately met with a young man named Walter Gifford, a steady-minded young man, who would have scorned—so he himself said—to pay his addresses to any girl otherwise than on honourable terms. Notwithstanding her capture of such a *rara avis*, her father was quite opposed to the notion of such a connection terminating in a wedding. He urged the necessity of his daughter's looking out for a husband who would raise her in the world's eye, and not throw herself away upon a fellow without a profession; and, although the fellow kept a valet de chambre, whose means, he was informed, were barely sufficient to keep himself in food and raiment, he ended by forbidding Gifford's future visits to his house—nay more, that she should drop his acquaintance. But Rosa had been too much humoured in every trifle during her bygone years to submit quietly to the will of another, even though that other was her father; and the more he urged her to break off the connection, the more obstinate did she become. She contrived, in spite of her father's prohibition, to see Walter Gifford. Their meetings were clandestine; and, on such occasions, they did not fail to vow eternal constancy, and to assert that all the fathers in the world should not prevent them from marrying each other. Once Gifford proposed an elopement; but, when Rosa informed him that, until her father's death, she was only a dependant upon his bounty, the steady-minded young man took a second thought of the matter, and dared say, after all, that it would be better not to be too precipitate.

At length Rosa's father did die. Rosa wept a good deal, deluging at least half-a-dozen cambric pocket-handkerchiefs with her tears; but the thoughts of coming into immediate possession of Woodland Lodge, and all the old man's wealth, after some short time, put a stop to her grief on his account for ever. It was buried in his grave with the last spadeful of mould thrown in by the sexton.

There being no bar now to her union with Gifford, Rosa Easton, after a fortnight spent in the solitude of her chamber, for decency's sake, wrote him a letter, desiring his presence on the morrow at Woodland Lodge.

The morrow morning came, as morrow mornings *will* come, all in due time. Rosa was up half-an-hour before her wont, having passed a rather sleepless night; and what young girl under similar circumstances would *not* have passed a sleepless night? Drawing the curtain of her bedroom window half aside, she looked forth upon the green lawn which lay in front of the cottage. The calm sunbeams of the early day were reposing on it; she thought she had never seen it look so pretty before. The tall trees too, which bordered it, seemed to wear a more lively aspect than usual; even the very ducks and geese, which, from time to time, waddled by, were, in her eyes, as so many birds of paradise. When we are pleased with ourselves, everything else in our estimation assumes *la couleur de rose.*

The entrance of Rosa's "own maid," Bridget, brought her from the window—Bridget was in her confidence, as all young ladies' "own maids" invariably are, and, being well aware that her mistress expected Mr Gifford that day at Woodland Lodge, she took more than ordinary pains with her aforesaid mistress's toilette. More than ordinary attention was bestowed on Rosa's curls, the while Bridget chatted away about things in general, and nothing in particular, to the great edification of Rosa. There was, however, a something mysterious about her manner, that morning, quite perceptible to Rosa. It seemed as if she had something of terrible import to reveal, yet withheld it, for the fear of something more terrible still—her mistress's anger. After a little, a *very* little coaxing, Rosa got the secret out of her. Bridget whispered it into her ear; and, oh! how suddenly her colour changed to a deathly paleness, as she started from the rush-bottomed

chair, whereon she had been for the last half hour deposited, while undergoing the ordeal of the curling tongs.

"Married!" she exclaimed—"Gifford married! No, no—it cannot be!" She said this with the air and accent of one who makes the wish a father to the thought.

"La, ma'am!" said Bridget, "that's all you knows of them men creturs! Ah, if you had had only the half of my experience! But it's no use talking; you never will be quite so experienced in sich matters as your humble servant—and pity that so good a lady should!"

"Come, now, Biddy," said her mistress, coaxingly, "do confess that this marriage has been got up by yourself on purpose to teaze me?"

"Ah, no, ma'am!" was the reply—"would that it were! But, alas!"—here she heaved a deep sigh, and turned the whites of her eyes heavenward—"alas! 'tis too true!"

"True? How know you of it? Whence your information? Speak, child!" almost screamed Miss Rosa.

"So I will, ma'am," said Bridget, twiddling the corner of her apron Francais—"So I will, ma'am, if you'll only give me time. You see, the case stands thus:—Our Martha has a small love-affair with Mister Billy Simpkins, Mr Gifford's *valley*—so called from being sich a *low sitivation*. Well, of course, our Martha agreed to correspond with Mister Billy Simpkins, from whom she yesterday received sich a sweet *billet*—so like himself!—containing the information I have jist communicated."

"And that billet?" inquired Rosa, who had hung breathlessly on Bridget's syllables.

"Is in Martha's possession, ma'am; but, I dare say, she would lend it to me for a short time—I'll run and fetch it."

And away she bundled out of the room, without waiting for her mistress's consent to the business. Rosa paced her chamber for nearly five minutes, at the expiration of which time her patience was fairly exhausted, and away she ran down stairs to look for Bridget and Mr Simpkins' love-letter. She had just got the length of the parlour-door, when out bounced Bridget from the kitchen, with the longed-for prize in her hand.

"Here it is, ma'am!" she cried, holding it up. "Martha was rather unwilling to let me have it."

"Make haste, then; give it me!" exclaimed the young lady, at the same time snatching the epistle—a three-cornered one, on perfumed paper—from Bridget, and running into the parlour, with Bridget at her heels. She tried to decipher the pothooks and hangers which met her gaze on opening it; but she found herself unable for the task.

"I'm all trepidation," she said; "I can't read it. Do you, Biddy!"

Bridget took the note from her mistress; and, in a clear, distinct voice, read as follows:—

"My Dear Martha,—This kums to let you no that i am in good helth at this present writting, hopping that yow ar in the same, my dear Martha. i hop yow got the small packet of tee safe, wat i sent yow direc from the hingine house, at Edinboro. Wen i see it so neetly paked, i sed—wat do you think?—Well, I sed it wood soot you gist to a *T*. i'm not a vane man, but i thinks as how that air's werry clever—don't you? O! wen shall wee 2 take tee agen together? By the by, tawkin of tee, our young master's married—and to 'oom, think ye? To no less a person than Patty Primrose, the grocer's daughter."

"Oh! the wretch!" ejaculated Bridget, by way of parenthesis, when she arrived at this particular point; and she was preparing to proceed with the remainder of the billet-doux, when her mistress interrupted her.

"Biddy!" she cried, "why will you go on so? Put up the fatal missive, put it up. I have heard enough to convince me of Walter Gifford's unworthiness. Oh! villain, villain! thus to blight the hopes of her who, fondly trusting to thine honour, gave up to thee her young affections."

So saying, as long as the sentimental fit was upon her, Rosa Easton sat down to her harp, and carolled forth these words to the beautiful air of *Durandarte and Bellerma*:—

"All my dreams of joy have perished,
Snowlike from the mountain height;
Slowly, surely were they cherished,
But fleet and sure has been their flight.

"E'en though faithless man deceive us,
To delusive hope we cling,
And the tempter will not leave us
Till we perish by its sting.

"Hark! a jocund peal is ringing
Through *his* halls of pomp and pride;
While despair its course is winging
To my lorn bower to claim its bride.

"Ah! my lonely heart is breaking,
And mine eyes with tears are dim;
Struggling pride its spoil is making,
Yet alters not my love for him."

Having thus given vent to her feelings in a song, she became more calm, yet for upwards of an hour afterwards she imposed upon herself the no very amiable task of chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancy. At the expiration of that time, up she rose and pranced about the room, making a determination in her own mind to marry the first man who would have her.

On a sudden, Bridget burst into the room, announcing that Mr Gifford had just turned the corner of the house on his way to the entrance. At first, Rosa resolved not to see him; but, thinking that he would, from that circumstance, conclude that she was mortified by his marriage, she desired that he should be shewn in, at the same time requesting Bridget to inform him that *she* was also married, for the palpable reason of shewing him that there were other men in the world who thought her worth the having. This fact was duly communicated to the aforesaid gentleman, with that peculiarly cutting air in which women delight to say severe things to those who happen to labour under their displeasure. The steady-minded young man betrayed considerable emotion, but yet he could hardly believe himself to think that Bridget spoke truth. His first question, therefore, to Rosa, on his entering the parlour was—"And are you really married, ma'am?"

"And if I am, sir, what then?" was the Scotch answer.

"Oh, nothing. But what am I to understand from so sudden an accident?"

"Draw what conclusions you please, sir. I will not condescend an explanation. I desire your presence no farther, sir; so I beg you will be gone." She waved him towards the door, and turned towards the window to conceal the tears which gathered in her eyes.

"Yet ere I go," said Gifford, as he stood with the handle of the door in his hand, about to turn it—"Ere I go, I should be glad to learn who—who is the *happy* man?"

This was a question for which Rosa was altogether unprepared; but, as she had already gone so far, she could not retrograde, so she therefore said, with great composure, "Mr Pigwiggins, sir, is the person whom I have the honour to call husband."

Mr Pigwiggins was a respectable dealer in slop-basins in the neighbouring town of Dunse. It was the first name that occurred to her recollection; and, on the spur of the moment, she gave utterance to it. Then, and only then, did its glaring absurdity flash upon her; and she could have laughed outright, had not prudence restrained her. Fortunately, Mr Gifford took it as truth; and, respectfully bidding her adieu, he was about to depart, when the idea

of sending his compliments to the husband struck him, as a capital device for wounding the finer feelings of Rosa, enhanced by his dwelling upon each syllable of the name, for a tormenting space of time, with a marked emphasis.

"Give my compliments to Mr Pig—wig—gins, ma'am," he exclaimed, with an air of mock solemnity.

"Be so good, Mr Gifford," said she, in return, "as give *my* compliments to the *ci-devant* Patty Primrose."

"Patty who?"

"Primrose, to be sure."

"Madam, I am somewhat at a loss. I know nothing of the lady you have just mentioned."

"What! not know your own wife?"

"Wife!—the devil! Some gross mistake is here, madam: will you inform me whence you derived your information?"

"You know that hand?" continued Rosa, producing Martha's letter.

"I do—'tis that scoundrel, Simpkins'."

"And your valet?"

"No; he is no servant of mine. I turned the rascal off a month ago; and he is now living with that puppy, Anslow, who has lately become a Benedict."

"This, then, explains all," said Rosa, exultingly. "And are you really not married?"

"Whether I am or not can be of little consequence to you, madam. I leave you to your meditations and your crockery."

And he was again about to go.

"O Walter!" cried Rosa, with a look of intense agony, will you leave me thus? Not one kind word? Cruel man!"

"Woman!—unjust, ungrateful as thy sex!—tax me not with such unmeaning epithets; for 'tis you only who have broken those vows we interchanged."

"Nay, nay, Walter; say not so—'twas but to try you; and I too am free."

Nothing could exceed the joy of Gifford, when he heard this. He snatched Rosa to his arms, and covered her cheeks with kisses, while he sighed forth his wish that she would consent to become his wife. And she did become his wife; and a day of regret it was to her, in after life, that on which she placed her hand in his, and vowed to love and obey him; for, not long after their marriage, Gifford threw aside the mask, and appeared in his true character. He had never loved Rosa—indeed, love was quite a stranger to his bosom—and it was only for her wealth that he had wooed her. This soon became apparent; for he treated her with coldness and neglect.

Tired to death by a residence at Woodland Cottage for the space of six months after his marriage, Walter Gifford proposed to his wife that they should visit London. To this Rosa was by no means averse; yet if she had been, it would have mattered little; the result would have been precisely the same, for she had no power to act against her husband's will, so completely had he obtained the mastery over her.

To London, therefore, they proceeded, with all possible despatch. Rosa had never before been within the walls of that vast and wealthy city, and the excitement attendant on a first visit to it was sufficient to buoy up her spirits for nearly a whole fortnight. In the company of her husband she visited many of the public places during the first week; but after that, if she wished to go anywhere, she must either do so alone, or with his footman to attend her, he himself preferring the society of any one else to that of his wife.

One evening when he had "dropped in for an hour"—*solus*, as usual—to witness the representation of a new ballet at the Opera House, he was struck with the pretty face and "the ancle neatly turned" of one of the figurantes. An introduction was easily procured; and, after a very short while, the fair lady was fixed in an elegant residence near Storey's Gate, with her carriage, servants, and the other paraphernalia of a "good settlement."

The frequency of Gifford's visits to this lady, necessarily curtailed the allowance of time he would otherwise have expended in his wife's company. His repeated absences—now extended to whole nights as well as days—awakened suspicions in the bosom of Rosa. The result was dissension. He came one evening, attended by a person habited as a coachman, and whose face was most carefully concealed by means of a slouch hat. Gifford, with an oath, ordered his wife to dress for a journey, while he himself proceeded to pack up her wearing apparel. In silence, Rosa obeyed.

A coach was waiting at the door, and Gifford desired her to enter it. A moment afterwards, the coach was moving rapidly onward. For two days they travelled without stopping, save but to change horses and refresh themselves. To Rosa's oft-repeated inquiry of, "Where are we going?" she could obtain no answer from her mysterious conductor. She remarked, too, that when he left the coach, if but for an instant, he fastened the door so as to prevent her escape. At length they stopped at a solitary cottage on the borders of a moor, and Rosa was given to understand that she was to be left here. The only inmate was an old woman, taciturn and hard of heart. Every night was Rosa locked within her chamber, and during the day she could not stir out without being followed and carefully watched by this old she Cerberus.

At length she found ways and means to effect her escape. It was in the night time she left the cottage. Her first step was to return to London, and learn from her husband the cause of his inhuman conduct. After a weary journey of eight days, she found herself again within sound of Bow-bells. Unaware of the present residence of Gifford, day by day did she watch, in the most frequented streets, to catch a glimpse of him. She was fortunate enough, in the end, to espy the very man who had acted in the capacity of coachman; and, with stealthy steps, she followed him. She saw him enter a splendid mansion in the vicinity of Storey's Gate. She approached the door and read on the plate the name of "Mademoiselle Garbuzzie." This was enough. That very night, by the aid of Gifford's footman, whom she bribed to the act, she gained admission to the house. Taking her station behind the window-curtains of the drawing-room, she patiently awaited the arrival of her husband and his paramour. About eleven o'clock, Gifford entered the room alone, pale and breathless. He rung the bell with violence. The footman appeared.

"Has Mademoiselle Garbuzzie been here this afternoon?"

"Yes, sir!" said his man; "and she and Mr Wallace went away together. She left this note for you, sir." The man withdrew.

"Curses light upon her," exclaimed Gifford, after reading the note. "She is gone at last with all—all, and left me almost a beggar." He sunk into a chair, overcome with rage and vexation. After a while he went on—"But I will not live to meet the sneers of the world. This pistol shall"——

"Hold!" cried his wife, rushing forward and catching his arm. He was awe-struck. He fell on his knees, imploring her forgiveness. It was granted; and a few days saw them again at Woodland Cottage.



WILSON'S

Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND.

MR SAMUEL RAMSAY THRIVEN;

A TALE OF LOVE AND BANKRUPTCY.

Chap. I.—A Way of Making Money.

All the world knows that Mandeville, the author of the "Fable of the Bees," and Shaftesbury, the author of the "Characteristics," divided a great portion of mankind on a question which is now no question at all. That there are, assuredly, some instances to be met with of rational bipeds, who exhibit scarcely any traces of a moral sense, and act altogether upon the principle of selfishness, we do not deny; but this admission does not bind us to the selfish theory, for the very good reason, that we hold these creatures to be nothing better than a species of monsters. Nor do we think the world, with the tendency to self-love that prevails in it, would have been the better for the want of these living, walking exemplars of their patron—the devil; for, of a surety, they shew us the fallen creature in all his naked deformity, and make us hate the principle of evil through the ugly flesh-case in which it works, and the noisome overt acts it turns up in the repugnant nostrils of good men. Now, if you are an inhabitant of that scandalous free-stone village that lies near Arthur Seat, and took its name from the Northumbrian king, Edwin—corrupted, by the conceit of the inhabitants, into Edin—you will say that we mean something personal in these remarks; and, very probably, when we mention the name of Mr Samuel Ramsay Thriven, who, about twenty years after Mr John Neal introduced to the admiring eyes of the inhabitants of the Scottish metropolis the term haberdasher, carried on that trade in one of the principal streets of the city, our intention will be held manifest. And what then? We will only share the fate, without exhibiting the talent of Horace, and shall care nothing if we return his good-humour—a quality of far greater importance to mankind than even that knowledge "which is versant with the stars."

Now, this Mr Samuel Ramsay Thriven, who took up, as we have already signified, the trade designated by the strange appellative introduced by the said John Neal, was one of those dabblers in morals who endeavour to make the whole system of morality accord with their own wishes. As to the moral sense, so strongly insisted for by the noble author of the "Characteristics," he considered it as a *taste* something like that for *vertù*, which a man might have or not have just as it pleased Dame Nature, or Mr Syntax Pedagogue, but which he could pretend to have as often and in as great profusion as it pleased himself. It was, he acknowledged, a very good thing to have, sometimes, about one, but there were many things in the world far better—such as money, a good house, good victuals, good clothing, and so forth. It was again, sometimes, a thing a man might be much better without. It formed a stumbling-block to prosperity; and when, at the long run, a man had made to it many sacrifices, and become a beggar, "rich in the virtue of good offices," he did not find that it got him a softer bed in an alms-house, or a whiter piece of bread at the door of the rich. These sentiments were probably strengthened by the view he took of the world, and especially of our great country where there is a mighty crying, and a mighty printing, about virtue, magnanimity, and honesty, in the abstract, while there is, probably, less real active honesty than might be found among the Karomantyns—yea, or the Hottentots or Cherokees. Then, too, it could not be denied that "riches cover a multitude of sins;" why, then, should not Mr Thriven strive to get rich?

Upon such a theory did Mr Samuel Thriven propose to act. It had clearly an advantage over theories in general, in so much as it was every day reduced to practice by a great proportion of mankind, and so proved to be a good workable speculation. That he intended to follow out the practical part of his scheme with the same wisdom he had exhibited in choosing his theory of morals, may be safely doubted. Caution, which is of great use to all men in a densely populated country, is an indispensable element in the composition of one who would be rich at the expense of others. A good-natured man will often allow himself to be cheated out of a sum which is not greater than the price of his ease, and there are a great number of such good-natured men in all communities. It is upon these that clever men operate; without them a great portion of the cleverest would starve. They are the lambs with sweet flesh and soft wool, making the plains a paradise for the wolves. A system of successful operations carried on against these quiet subjects, for a number of years, might have enabled Mr Samuel Ramsay Thriven to have retired, with his feelings of enjoyment blunted, and his conscience quickened, to some romantic spot where he might have turned poetical. An idle man is always, to some extent, a poet; and a rogue makes often a good sentimentalist.

This ought clearly to have been the course which worldly caution should have suggested as the legitimate working out of the theory of selfishness. But Mr Thriven was not gifted with the virtue of patience to the same extent that he was with the spirit of theorizing on the great process of getting rich. He wanted to seize Plutus by a *coup de main*, and hug the god until he got out of him a liberal allowance. The plan has been attended with success; but it is always a dangerous one. The great deity of wealth has been painted lame, blind, and foolish, because he gives, without distinction, to the undeserving as well as to the worthy—to the bad often more than to the good. It is seldom his godship will be coaxed into a gift; and if he is attempted to be forced, he can use his lame leg, and send the rough worshipper to the devil. Neither can we say that Mr Thriven's scheme was new or ingenious, being no other than to "*break* with the full hand"—a project of great antiquity in Scotland, and struck at, for the first time, by the act 1621, cap. 18. It existed, indeed, in ancient Rome, and was comprehended under the general name of stellionate, from stelio, a little subtle serpent, common in Italy. Always in great vogue in our country, it at one time roused the choler of our judges to such an extent that they condemned the culprits either to wear the yellow cap and stockings of different colours, or be for ever at the mercy of their creditors. But these times had gone by, and a man might make a very respectable thing of a break, if he could manage it adroitly enough to make it appear that he had himself been the victim of misplaced confidence. So

Mr Samuel having given large orders to the English houses for goods, at a pretty long credit, got himself in debt to an amount proportioned to the sum he wished to make by his failure. There is no place in the world where a man may get more easily in debt than in Scotland. We go for a decent, composed, shrewd, honest people; and, though we are very adequately and sufficiently hated by the volatile English, whom we so often beat on their own ground, and at their own weapons, we enjoy a greater share of their confidence in mercantile matters than their own countrymen. Vouchsafe to John the privilege of abusing Sawney, and calling him all manner of hard names, and he will allow his English neck to be placed in the Scotch nooze, with a civility and decorum that is just as commendable as his abuse of our countryman is ungenerous and unmanly. Mr Thriven's warehouses were, accordingly, soon filled with goods from both England and Scotland; and it is no inconsiderable indication of a man's respectability that he is able to get pretty largely in debt. When a man is to enter upon the speculations of failing, the step we have now mentioned is the first and most important preliminary. Debt is the Ossa from which the successful speculator rolls into the rich vale of Tempe. There are some rugged rocks in the side of his descent to independence—such as the examinations under the statutes—that are next to be guarded against, and the getting over these is a more difficult achievement than the getting himself regularly constituted a debtor. The running away of a trusty servant with a hundred pounds, especially if he has forged the cheque, may be the making of a good speculator in bankruptcy, because the loss of a thousand or two may be safely laid to the charge of one who dare not appear to defend himself. The failure and flight of a relation, to whom one gives a hundred pounds to leave him in his books a creditor in a thousand, is also a very good mode of overcoming some of the difficulties of failing; and a clever man, with a sharp foresight, ought to be working assiduously for a length of time in collecting the names of removing families, every one of whom will make a good "bad-debtor." These things were not unknown to Mr Thriven; but accident did what the devil was essaying to do for him, or rather, speaking in a more orthodox manner, the great enemy, taking the form of the mighty power, ycleped Chance, set the neighbouring uninsured premises, belonging to Miss Fortune, the milliner, in a blaze; and a large back warehouse, in which there was scarcely anything save Mr Thriven's legers, was burnt so effectually, that no person could have told whether they were full of Manchester goods, or merely atmospheric air of the ordinary weight—that is, thirty-one grains to a hundred cubic inches.

When a respectable man wishes ardently for a calamity, he arrays his face in comely melancholy, because he has too much respect for public decorum to outrage the decencies of life. Mr Samuel Ramsay Thriven accordingly *looked* the loss he had sustained with a propriety that might have done honour to a widower between whom and a bad wife the cold grave has been shut for the space of a day, and then set about writing circulars to his creditors, stating that, owing to his having sustained a loss through the burning of a warehouse where he had deposited three thousand pounds worth of goods, he was under the necessity of stopping payment. No attorney ever made more of letter-writing than Mr Samuel did on that day: in place of three shillings and fourpence for two pages, every word he penned was equal to a pound.

Chap. II.—The Inscription.

"Well," said Mr Samuel Thriven, after he had retired to his house, "this has been hard and hot work; but, a man has a satisfaction in doing his duty, and that satisfaction may not be diminished by a bottle of port."

Now the port was as good as Ofleys; and Mr Thriven's thirst was nothing the less for the fire of the previous night, which he had done his utmost not to extinguish, and as he was in good spirits, he, like those people in good health, who, to make themselves better, begin to take in a load of Morrison's pills, drew another cork, with that increased sound which belongs peculiarly to second bottles, and, in a short time, was well through with his potation. "How much, now," said he, as he pretended, in a knowing way, to look for a dead fly in the glass, which he held up between him and the candle, shutting, in the operation, the left eye, according to the practice of connoisseurs—"How much may I make of this transaction in the way of business?—Let me see—let me see."

And, as he accordingly tried to see, he took down from the mantle-piece an ink-bottle and a pen, and, having no paper within reach, he laid hold of a small book, well-known to serious-minded people, and which was no other, in fact, than "The Pilgrim's Progress." But it was all one to Mr Samuel Ramsay Thriven, in the middle of his second bottle, what the book was, provided it had a blank leaf at the beginning or end thereof. It might, indeed, have been the "Louping-on-Stone for Heavy-Bottomed Believers," or the "Economy of Human Life," or the "Young Man's Best Companion," or "A New Way to Pay Old Debts;" or any other book or brochure in the wide republic of letters which the wisdom or wit of man has ever produced. It may verily be much doubted if he knew himself what book it was.

"Well, let me see," he said again, as he seized the pen, and held the blank leaf open before him. "The three thousand pounds lost by the fire is a very good item; I can easily make a very good list of very bad debts to the extent of five hundred pounds; I have three thousand of good bank-notes in the house; and if I get off with a dividend of five shillings in the pound, which I can pay out of my stock, I may clear by this single transaction, in the way of business, as much as may make me comfortable for the whole period of my natural life."

And having made some monologue of this kind, he began to jot down particulars; laying on the table his pen, occasionally, to take another glass of the port wine, and resuming his operation again, with that peculiar zest which accompanies a playfulness of the fancy on a subject of darling interest. So he finished his arithmetical operation and dream, just about the time when the wine finished him; fell sound asleep; and awoke about two in the morning, with a headach, and no more recollection of having committed his secret to the blank leaf of "The Pilgrim's Progress," than if he had never written a word thereon at all.

Chap. III.—The Facing of Creditors.

Of all men in the world, a bankrupt requires to wear a lugubrious look. It is proper, too, that he should keep the house, hold out the flag of distress, and pretend that he is an unfortunate mortal, who has been the prey either of adverse fate or designing rogues. Of all this Mr Thriven was well aware as ever man could be; no man could have acted the dyvour better than he, even though he had been upon the pillory, with the bankrupt's yellow cap on his head. Creditors kept calling upon him—some threatening imprisonment, and some trying to cajole him out of a preference; but Mr Samuel was a match for them all.

"It is all very well to look thus concernedly," said Mr Horner, a large creditor; "but will this pay the two hundred pounds you owe me?"

"Would to heaven that it might!" replied Mr Thriven,

drawing his hand over his eyes; "but, alas! it is the peculiar feature of the misfortune of bankruptcy, that a man who has been himself ruined—ay, burnt out of his stock by a fire that he had no hand in raising, and thus made a beggar of, probably for ever—receives not a single drop of sympathy in return for all the tears he sheds for his unfortunate creditors. Your case concerns me, sir, most of all; and, were it for nothing in the wide world but to make up your loss, I will strive with all my energies, even to the urging of the blood from the ends of my laborious fingers, and to the latest period of a wretched existence."

And Mr Horner being mollified, he was next attacked by Mr Wrench.

"It is but fair to inform you, sir," said the vulture-faced dealer in ginghams, "that I intend to try the effect of the prison upon you."

"That is because the most wicked of nature's elements—fire—has rendered me a beggar," replied Mr Samuel, rubbing again his eyes. "It is just the way of this world: when fate has rendered a man unfortunate, his fellow creature, man, falls upon him to complete his wretchedness; even like the creatures of the forest, who fall upon the poor stag that has been wounded by the fall from the crags, man is ever cruelest to him who is already down. Yet you, who threaten to put me in jail, are the creditor of all others whose case concerns me most. The feeling for my own loss is nothing to what I suffer for yours; and, I will never be satisfied till, by hard labour, I make up to you what I have been the unwilling and unconscious instrument of depriving you of."

And having got quit of Wrench, who declared himself not satisfied, though his threat, as he he departed, was more feebly expressed, he was accosted by Mr Bairnsfather.

"Your face, sir, tortures me," said Mr Samuel, turning away his head, "even as one is tortured by the ghost of the friend he has murdered with a bloody and relentless hand. All my creditors put together do not furnish me matter of grief equal to your individual case. Do not I know that you are the father of ten children, whom probably I have ruined. Yet am I not also ruined, and all by a misfortune whose origin is beyond the ken of mortals."

"You have spoken a melancholy truth, Mr Thriven," replied the father; "but will that truth feed my children."

"No, sir; but I will feed them, when once discharged under a sequestration," rejoined Mr Thriven. "Your case, above all the others, it shall be my care to assuage. Nor night nor day shall see my energies relaxed, till this wrong shall be made right."

"Our present necessities must be relieved," rejoined "the parent." "Could you not give us a part of our debt, in the meantime."

"And be dishonest in addition to being unfortunate!" ejaculated Mr Samuel. "That, sir, is the worst cut of all. No, no. I may be imprisoned, I may be fed on bread and water, I may be denied the benefit of the act of grace, but I shall never be forced to give an undue preference to one creditor over another. You forget, Mr Bairnsfather, that a bankrupt may have a conscience."

After much more of such converse, Mr Bairnsfather retired. And the next who came for the relief which she was not destined to receive, was Widow Mercer.

"This is a dreadful business, Mr Thriven," said she, as she ran forwards in the confusion of unfeigned anguish.

"Dreadful, indeed, my good lady," answered he; "and who can feel it more than myself—that is, after you."

"You are a man, and I am a woman," rejoined the disconsolate creditor; "a woman, who has struggled since the death of her good husband, to support herself and a headless family, who, but for their mother's industry, might have, ere now, been reduced to seek their bread as the boon of pity. But, ah, sir it cannot be, that you are to class me with the rest of your creditors. They are men, and may make up their losses in some other way. To me the loss of fifty pounds would be total ruin. Oh, sir, you will!—I know by that face of sympathy, you will make me an exception. Heaven will bless you for it; and my children will pray for you to the end of our lives."

"All this just adds to my misery," replied Mr Samuel, "and that misery, heaven knows, is great enough already. Your case is that of the mother and the widow; and what need is there for a single word, to tell me that it stands apart from all the others. But, madam, were I to pay your debt, do not you see that both you and I would be acting against the laws of our country. What supports me, think ye, under my misfortune, but the consciousness of innocence. Now, you would cruelly take away from me that consciousness, whereby, for the sake of a fifty pound note, you would render me miserable here, and a condemned man hereafter. A hotter fire, of a verity, there is, than that which burnt up my stock. But I am bound to make amends for the loss I have brought upon you; and you may rest assured that, as soon as I am discharged, I will do my best for you and your poor bereaved sons and daughters."

And thus Mr Thriven managed these importunate beings, termed creditors, in a manner that he, doubtless, considered highly creditable to himself, in so far as he thereby spread more widely the fact that he had been ruined by no fault of his own, at the same time that he proved himself to be a man of feeling, justice, and sentiment. Meanwhile, his agent, Mr Sharp, was as busy as ever an attorney could be, in getting out a sequestration, with the indispensable adjunct of a personal protection, which the Lords very willingly granted upon the lugubrious appeal, set forth in the petition, that Mr Thriven's misfortunes were attributable to the element of fire. A fifty-pound note too, sent his shopman, Mr Joseph Clossmuns, over the Atlantic; and, the coast being clear, Mr Thriven went through his examinations with considerable eclat.

Chap. IV.—The Windfall.

"These men," said Mr Thriven, after he got home to dinner, "have worried me so by their questions, that they have imposed upon me the necessity of taking some cooling liquor to allay the fervour of my blood. I must drink to them besides, for they were, upon the whole, less severe than they might have been; and a bottle of cool claret will answer both ends. And now," he continued, after he drank off a bumper to the long lives of his creditors—"the greatest part of my danger being over, I can see no great risk of my failing in getting them to accept a composition of five shillings in the pound. But what then? I have no great fancy to the counter. After all, a haberdasher is at best but a species of man milliner; and I do not see why I should not, when I get my discharge in my pocket, act the gentleman as well as the best of them. All that is necessary is to get the devout Miss Angelina M'Falzen, who regenerates the species by distributing good books, to consent to be my wife. She has a spare figure, a sharp face, and a round thousand. Her fortune will be a cover to my idleness; and then I can draw upon the sum I have made by my failure, just as occasion requires."

At the end of this monologue, a sharp broken voice was heard in the passage; and Mr Samuel Thriven's bottle of claret was, in the twinkling of an eye, replaced by a jug of cool spring water.

"Ah, how do you do, my dear Miss M'Falzen?" cried Mr Samuel, as he rose to meet his devout sweetheart.

"Sir," responded the devout distributer of tracts, stiffly and coldly, "you are in far better spirits than becomes

one who is the means of bringing ruin on so many families. I expected to have found you contrite of heart, and of a comely sadness of spirits and seriousness of look."

"And yet I am only feasting on cold water," replied Samuel, letting the muscles of his face fall, as he looked at the jug. "But you know, Miss Angelina, that I am innocent of the consequences of the fire, and, when one has a clear conscience, he may be as happy in adversity over a cup of water, as he may be in prosperity over a bottle of claret."

"A pretty sentiment, Mr Thriven—la! a beautiful sentiment," replied Miss Angelina; "and, satisfied as I am of your purity, let me tell you that our intercourse shall not, with my will, be interrupted by your misfortune. I would rather, indeed, feel a delight in soothing you under your affliction, and administering the balm of friendship to the heart that is contrite, under the stroke which cannot be averted."

"And does my Angelina," cried Samuel, "regard me with the same kindness and tenderness in my present reduced circumstances, as when I was engaged in a flourishing trade, which might have emboldened me to hope for a still more intimate, ay, and sacred connection?"

"Mr Thriven," replied the other, gravely, "I have called in behalf of Mrs Mercer."

Samuel's face underwent some considerable change.

"I have called in behalf of Mrs Mercer, who has reported to me some sentiments stated by you to her, of so beautiful and amiable a character, and so becoming a Christian, that I admire you for them. You promised to do your utmost, after you are discharged, to make amends to her and her poor family for the loss she will sustain by your bankruptcy. Ah, sir, that alone proves to me that you are an honest, innocent, and merely unfortunate insolvent; and to shew you that I am not behind you in magnanimity, I have paid her the fifty pound wherein you were indebted to her, and got an assignation to her debt. You may pay me when you please; and, meanwhile, I will accept of the composition you intend to offer to your creditors."

"Fifty pound off her tocher," muttered Samuel between his teeth, and then took a drink of the cold water, in the full memory of the claret.

"It scarcely beseems a man," said he, "to be aught but a silent listener when his praise is spoken by one he loves and respects. But, is it possible, Miss M'Falzen, that my misfortune has not changed those feelings—those—excuse me, Miss Angelina—those intentions with which, I had reason to believe, you regarded me."

And, with great gallantry, he seized the fair spinster round the waist, as he had been in the habit of doing before he was a bankrupt, to shew, at least, that he was now no bankrupt in affection.

"To be plain with you, sir," replied she, wriggling herself out of his hands, "my intention once was to wait until I saw whether you would come unscathed and pure out of the fiery ordeal; but, on second thoughts, I conceived that this would be unfair to one whom I had always looked upon as an honest man, though, probably, not so seriously minded a Christian as I could have wished; therefore," she added, smiling—yet no smiling matter to Samuel—"I have, you see, trusted you fifty pounds—a pretty good earnest—he! he!—that my heart is just where it was."

Mr Samuel Ramsay Thriven kissed Miss Angelina M'Falzen.

"But oh, sir," she added, by way of protest, "I hope and trust that not one single spot shall be detected in your fair fame and reputation, and that you will come forth out of trial as unsullied in the eyes of good men, as you were pure in the estimation of one who thus proves for you her attachment."

"Never doubt it," replied Mr Samuel. "Innocence gives me courage and confidence."

He placed, theatrically, his hand on his heart.

"And what think you," added Miss Angelina, "of John Bunyan's book, which I lent you, and which I now see lying here? Is it not a devout performance—an extraordinary allegory? How much good I do by these kind of books! Ha, by the by, Mrs Bairnsfather, good creature, wishes to read it. So I shall just put it in my pocket. To be plain with you, she is much cast down, poor creature, by the loss her husband has sustained through your involuntary failure; and I have said that she will find much comfort in the 'Pilgrim's Progress.'"

"A stanch book, madam," replied Samuel, seriously—"an extraordinary allegory, worth a piece of the vellum of the old covenant. I have derived great satisfaction and much good from it. I have no doubt it will support her, as it has done me, under our mutual affliction."

"Oh, how I do love to hear you talk that way," replied Miss Angelina. "It is so becoming your situation. When do you think you will get a discharge? I will answer for Mr Bairnsfather agreeing to the composition; and you know I am now a creditor myself in fifty pounds. Of course you have my vote; but you will tell me all about it afterwards. Good day, Mr Thriven."

"Good day, Miss M'Falzen."

The which lady was no sooner out than was the bottle of claret. In a few minutes more Mr Thriven was laughing over his replenished glass, as totally oblivious of the secret carried away by his lover, on the blank leaf of the good old tinker's book, as he was on that night when he made free with the two bottles of port as good as Ofleys.

"The matter looks well enough," said he. "I can make no manner of doubt that my composition will be accepted; and then, with the two thousand five hundred, at least, that I will make of my bankruptcy, and the round thousand possessed by Miss Angelina M'Falzen, I can perform the part of a walking gentleman on the great stage of the world."

"Is Mr Thriven within?" he now heard asked at the door.

"Ho, it is Sharp!" muttered he, as he shoved the bottle and the glass into a recess, and laid again hold of the water jug.

"Water, Thriven!" cried the attorney, as he bounded forward and seized the bankrupt by the hand. "Water; and Miss Grizel M'Whirter of Cockenzie dead, of a dead certainty, this forenoon; and you her nephew, and a will in her drawers, written by Jem Birtwhistle, in your favour, and her fortune ten thousand; and the never a mortal thought the old harridan had more than a five hundred."

"The devil a drop!" cried Mr Samuel Thriven. "The devil a drop of water; for, have I not in this press a half bottle of claret, which I laid past there that day of the fire, and never had the courage to touch it since. But *me* her heir! Ho, Mr Joseph Sharp, you are, of a verity, fooling? poor bankrupt, who has not a penny in the world after setting aside his composition of five shillings in the pound. *Me* her heir! Why I was told by herself that I was cut off with a shilling; and you must say it seriously ere I believe a word on't."

"I say it as seriously," replied the writer, "as ever you answered a home-thrust to-day in the sheriff's office, as to the amount of stock you lost by the burning of your premises—as sure as a decree of the fifteen. I say your loss had made her repent; so come away with the claret."

Mr Thriven emptied the whole of the half bottle, at one throw, into a tumbler.

"Drink, thou pink of an attorney!" said he, and then fell back into his chair, his mouth wide open, his eyes fixed on the roof, and his two hands closed in each other, as if each had been two notes for five thousand each.

"Are you mad, Mr Thriven?" cried Sharp, after he had bolted the whole tumbler of claret.

"Yes!" answered Mr Samuel Ramsay Thriven

"Have you any more of this Bourdeaux water in the house?"

"Yes!" answered Mr Thriven. "Open that lockfast," (pointing to a press,) "and drink till you are only able to shout 'M'Whirter'—'Cockenzie'—'Thriven'—'ten thousand'—'hurra!'—and let never a word more come out of you, till you fall dead drunk on the floor."

The first part of the request, at least, was very quickly obeyed, and two bottles were placed on the table, one of which the attorney bored in an instant, and had a good portion of it rebottled in his stomach by the time that Mr Thriven got his eyes taken off the roof of the chamber.

"Hand me half a tumbler!" cried he, "that I may gather my senses, and see the full extent of my misfortune."

"Misfortune!" echoed Sharp.

"Ay!" rejoined Samuel, as he turned the bottom of the tumbler to the roof. "Why did Grizel M'Whirter die, sir, until I got my discharge?"

"Ah, sir!" replied Sharp, on whom the wine was already began to operate—"You have thus a noble opportunity of being the architect of a reputation that might be the envy of the world. You can now pay your creditors in full—twenty shillings in the pound, and retain five thousand to yourself, with the character of being that noblest work of Nature—an honest man."

"When a thing is utterly beyond one's reach," rejoined Samuel, looking, with a wry face, right into the soul of the attorney, "how beautiful it appears."

Sharp accepted cooly the cut, because he had claret to heal it, otherwise he would have assuredly knocked down Mr Samuel Thriven.

"I beg your pardon, Mr Sharp!" continued his friend; "but I felt a little pained, sir, at the high-flown expression of the great good that awaits me, as if I were not already conscious of being, and known to be that noblest work of Nature. The cut came from you, Mr Sharp, and I only returned it. All I regret, sir, is, that my aunt did not live till I got my discharge, because then, not being bound to pay my creditors one farthing, I might have paid them in full, without obligation at all, and thereby have proved myself what I am—a *generous* man. No more of the claret. You must away with me to Cockenzie, to see that the repositories are sealed, and the will safe."

"By my faith, I forgot that!" replied Sharp; "a pretty good sign that, if you are a generous man, I am not a selfish one. We had better," he added, "let the claret alone till we return from Cockenzie. What think you?"

Now Samuel had already told Sharp that he was to have no more of the wine; and the question of the attorney, which was a clear forestaller, would have angered any man who was not an heir (five minutes old) of ten thousand. But Samuel knew better than to quarrel with the attorney at that juncture; so he answered him in the affirmative; and, in five minutes afterwards, the heir and the lawyer were in a coach, driving off to Cockenzie. The bankrupt was, in a few minutes more, in a dream—the principal vision of which was himself in the act of paying his creditors in full with their own money, and earning a splendid reputation for honesty. The sooner he performed the glorious act, the greater credit he would secure by it; his name would be in the *Courant* and the *Mercury*, headed by the large letters—"Praiseworthy instance of honesty, coming out, in full strength, from the ordeal of fire."

"What has Miss Angelina M'Falzen been doing at the house of Mrs Bairnsfather?" cried Sharp, as he turned from the window of the carriage (now in the Canongate) to the face of Samuel, whose eyes were fixed by the charm of his glorious hallucination.

"Lending her the Pilgrim's Progress!" answered Samuel, as he started from his dream.

Now Sharp could not for the life of him understand this ready answer of his friend, for he had put the query to awaken him from his dream, and without the slightest hope of receiving a reply to a question, which savoured so much of the character of questions in general; so he left him to his dream, and, in a short time, they were at Cockenzie.

Chap. V.—The Tea Party.

"Well, my dear," said Mr Bairnsfather to his wife, when he came home to tea on that same afternoon of which we have now been narrating the incidents, "I hope you are getting over our losses; yet I have no very good news for you to-day, for all that Thriven intends to offer of dividend is five shillings in the pound."

"It is but a weary world this we live in!" said the disconsolate wife. "We are all pilgrims; and there is for each of us some slough of despond, through which we must struggle to the happy valley."

"What, ho!" rejoined the husband, "I have come home to tea, and you are giving me a piece of Bunyan. Come, lay down your book, for Mr Wrench and Mr Horner are to be here to get some of your souchong."

"And I," replied the goodwife, "asked Miss Angelina M'Falzen to come back and get a cup with us. I could not do less to the devout creature, for she took the trouble of going to Mr Thriven's to day, and getting from him 'The Pilgrim's Progress,' that she might bring it to me to reconcile me to the evils of life, and, among the rest, the loss which we have sustained by her friend's failure."

"Poh! I hate all Pilgrim's-Progress-reading insolvents!" rejoined the husband, taking the book out of his wife's hands. "Go, love, and get ready the tea, while I sojourn with the Elstow tinker, in the valley of humiliation, out of which a cup of China brown stout and some converse will transport me to the 'house beautiful.'"

And Mr Bairnsfather, while his wife went to prepare tea, and his many children were dispersed here and there and everywhere, got very rapidly into "Vanity Fair," of the which being somewhat aweary as he said, with a yawn, he turned the leaves over and over, and at last fixed his eyes on the leaf that had once been, though it was now no longer, blank. The awl of the Elstow tinker himself never could have gone with greater determination through the leather of a pair of bellows, than did Mr Bairnsfather's eye seem to penetrate that written page. Like the seer of the vision of a ghost in the night, he drew his head back, and he removed it forwards, and he shut his eyes, and opened his eyes, and rubbed his eyes, and the more he did all this, the more he was at a loss to comprehend what the writing on the said blank leaf was intended to carry to the eyes of mortals. It was of the hand-writing of Mr Samuel Ramsay Thriven, for a certainty—he could swear to it; for the bill he had in his possession—and whereby he would lose three fourth parts of two hundred pounds—was written in the same character. What *could* it mean?

"What *can* it mean," he said, again and again.

"How should I, if you, who are a cleverer man, do not know, Mr Bairnsfather," said Mr Wrench, who was standing at his back, having entered in the meantime. "I have read the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' which Mrs B. says you are reading, more than once, and fairly admit that there are obscure passages in it. But here comes Mr Horner, who can perhaps unravel the mystery, if you can point out what limb of the centipede allegory it is which appears to you to have a limp."

"By my faith it is in the tail," said Mr Bairnsfather, as he still bored his eyes into the end of the book.

"Let me see the passage," said Mr Horner.

And all the three began to look at the writing, which

set forth the heads and particulars of Mr Samuel Thriven's gain by his bankruptcy.

"A very good progress for a pilgrim," said Mr Horner; and they looked at each other knowingly, and winked their six eyes, and nodded their three heads.

Miss M'Falzen and the tea came in at this moment. The three creditors were mute, and the devout spinster was talkative. Mrs Bairnsfather then filled up and handed round the tea-cups, (they sat all close to the table,) and her husband handed round to his two friends the book.

"What an interest that book *does* produce," said Miss Angelina, apparently piqued by the attention shewn to the genius of the tinker.

"Come now, Miss Angelina," said Mrs Bairnsfather, "confess that that copy produces no small interest in yourself, considering the hands it was in to-day."

"Fie, fie! ma'am," rejoined the blushing spinster. "How could the touch of a man's fingers impart a charm to mere paper. If Mr Thriven had appended some pretty piece of devout or poetical sentiment to it, why, you know, that would have made all the difference in the world, ma'am. He is really an excellent man, Mr Thriven; though we have all suffered in consequence of his loss, yet, I daresay, we all feel for his unmerited misfortune."

The three creditors were too much absorbed in Bunyan even to smile.

"When did you lend this copy to Mr Thriven?" inquired Mr Wrench; "and the two others fixed their eyes, filled with awful import, on the face of the devout spinster."

"Just the day before the fire!" replied she; "and ah, sir, how delighted I am that I did it, for he assures me that has sustained him wonderfully in his affliction."

The three men smiled, rose simultaneously, and retired to a parlour, taking Bunyan with them. Their looks were ominous; and Mrs Bairnsfather could not, for the world, understand the mystery. After some time, they returned, and looked more ominously than before.

"It is worth three thousand pounds, if it is worth a penny," said Mr Horner, seriously.

"Every farthing of it," rejoined Mr Wrench. "The most extraordinary book I ever saw in my life."

"An exposition miraculous, through the agency of heaven," added Mr Bairnsfather.

Now all this time their tea was cooling, and the hostess examined and searched the eyes of her husband and guests. Have they all got inspired or mad, thought she; but her thought produced no change, for the men still looked and whispered, and shook their heads, and nodded, and winked, and left their tea standing, till she began to think of the state of the moon.

"How delighted I am," ejaculated Miss M'Falzen; "for I never saw such an effect produced by the famous allegory in any family into which I ever introduced it. You see the effect of agitation in devout matters, Mrs Bairnsfather."

"You know not half the effect it has produced on us, ma'am," said Mr Horner. "It has electrified us—so much so indeed, that we cannot remain longer to enjoy your excellent society. You will, therefore, ladies, excuse us if we swallow our tea cleverly, and go to promulgate in the proper quarters the information afforded us by this wonderful production."

"The sooner we are away the better," added Mr Wrench, drinking off his cup. "We must call a private meeting, and lay it secretly before them."

"Certainly," added Mr Bairnsfather; "and you, Miss M'Falzen, authorize us to tell the peregrinations of the book, into whose hands it has been, and how it came here."

"Bless you, sir," cried the devout spinster—while Mrs Bairnsfather kept staring at her husband and guests, unable to solve the strange mystery—"You do not know a tithe of the good that this little book has achieved. It has been in half the houses in the Cowgate and Canongate. It is relished by the poor, and sought after by the rich; it mends the heart, improves the understanding, and binds up the wounds of those that are struck by the hands of the archers. Oh! I agitate in the good cause mightily with it, and others of the same class; and may all success attend your efforts, also in so excellent a cause. Call meetings by all means, read, expound, examine, exhort, entreat, and, hark ye, take Mr Samuel Thriven with you, for his heart is in the cause of the improvement of his fellow-creatures, and he knows the value of the allegory of the devout tinker of Elstow.

"We cannot do without Mr Thriven," replied Mr Bairnsfather with a smile; and while Mrs Bairnsfather was calling out to them to take another cup, and explain to her the meaning of their conduct, the creditors rose altogether, and, taking their hats and Bunyan, were in the point of leaving the room in great haste and manifest excitement, when the door opened, and the soft voice of Widow Mercer saluted them.

"Have you heard the news," said she.

"Does it concern Mr Thriven," replied more than one.

"Yes, to be sure it does," rejoined she. "We will all now get full payment of our debts, what think ye of that, sirs."

"Hush, hush," said Mr Bairnsfather, in the ear of the Widow. "Say nothing of 'The Pilgrim's Progress.' You know Miss M'Falzen is a friend of Mr Thriven's."

"'The Pilgrims Progress,'" ejaculated the widow.

"Alas! he is, of a verity, mad," rejoined Mrs Bairnsfather.

"'The Pilgrim's Progress,'" again, cried Mrs Mercer.

"Tush, we knew all about it," whispered Mr Wrench. "You also have seen the book."

"Yes," replied the widow, "I have, as who hasn't? but Lord bless me!—and she whispered in his ear—"what, in the name of wonder has 'The Pilgrim's Progress' to do with Mr Thriven having got ten thousand pounds left him by Mrs Grizel M'Whirter."

The whisper was communicated to the two of their creditors by Mr Wrench. The three merchants, stimulated at the same moment by the same impulse of joy, laid hold of the good widow, and whirled her like a top round the room, snapping their fingers the while, and exhibiting other perfectly innocent demonstrations of gladness.

"The most extraordinary method of proselytizing," said the spinster, "that I, who have carried on the trade of mending the species for many years, have ever yet seen."

"It is all beyond my poor wits together," added the wife.

And beyond her poor wits the creditors allowed it to remain, for they immediately went forth upon their intended mission. In some hours afterwards, accordingly, there was a secret meeting in "The White Horse," not less dangerous to Mr Samuel Thriven than was that held in the Trojan one to old Troy.

Chap. VI.—The Payment.

Now all this time, while Mr Thriven's creditors were in The "White Horse," he himself was in heaven; for Sharp and he having found all right at Cockenzie, returned and sat down to finish the claret which had been forestalled by the attorney before setting out. They resolved upon consigning Mrs Grizel M'Whirter to the cold earth a day sooner than custom might have warranted; and the reason for this especial care was simply that Mr Samuel wished, with

all the ardour inspired by the Bourdeaux waters, to make a grand and glorious display of his honesty, by calling all his creditors together, and paying them principal and interest—twenty shillings in the pound. They even, at this early period, set about making a draft of the circular letter, which was to announce the thrilling intelligence.

"Heavens! what a commotion this will produce among the trade!" said Samuel, as he threw himself back in his chair, and fixed his enchanted eye on Sharp's copy. "It will electrify them; and, sir, the editors of the newspapers are bound, as patrons of public virtue, to set it forth as an example to others to induce them to do the same in time coming. And now, since we have discussed so much business and claret, we will retire to our beds; I to enjoy the satisfaction of having resolved on a noble action, and you the hope of making a few six-and-eightpences by the death of Grizel M'Whirter of Cockenzie."

"*A few!*" cried Sharp, in an attorney's heroics. "You will see, when you count them, I am not less honest or generous than yourself."

The friends thereupon separated, to enjoy in their beds the two pleasures incident to their peculiar situations.

At the end of the period—less, by one day, than the customary time of corpses being allowed to remain on the face of the earth—Mrs Grizel M'Whirter was buried; and as her will contained a specific assignation to the greater part of her money, the same was, in a day or two afterwards, got hold of by Mr Thriven, and out went the round of circulars to the creditors, announcing that, on the following Thursday, Mr Thriven would be seated in his house, ready to pay all his creditors their debts, and requesting them to attend and bring with them their receipts. Among these circulars was one to Miss Angelina M'Falzen—the very woman he had promised, before he succeeded to Miss Grizel M'Whirter's fortune, to make a wife of; a pretty plain proof that now, when he had become rich, he intended to shake off the devout spinster who had attempted to reform him by lending him of the allegory of Tinker of Elstow. The eventful day at length arrived, when Mr Thriven was to enjoy the great triumph he had panted for—viz., to pay his creditors in full every farthing, with their own money; and, at the hour appointed, a considerable number arrived at his house, among whom not a few knew, as well as they did the contents of their own Bibles, the nefarious device of the haberdasher. When the creditors were seated—

"It ill becomes a man," said Mr Thriven, affecting a comely modesty—"It ill becomes one who resolves merely to do an act of ordinary justice, to take credit to himself for the possession of uncommon honesty. Therefore, I say, away with all egotistical assumption of principles, which ought to belong to a man, merely (as we say in trade) as part and parcel of humanity; for, were it a miracle to be honest, why should we not tolerate dishonesty, which yet is, by the voice of all good men, condemned and put down. The debts due to you I incurred, why then should I not pay them? It makes not a *nail* of difference that I lost three-fourths of the amount thereof by fire; because, what had you to do with the fire? *You* were not the incendiaries. No; the fault lay with me; I should have insured my stock, in gratitude for the credit with which you honoured me. It is for these reasons that I now disdain to take any credit to myself for coming thus cleverly forward to do you an act of justice, which the will of heaven has put in my power, by the demise of that lamented woman, Mrs Grizel M'Whirter, and which you could by law have forced me to do, though, probably, not so soon as I now propose to do it of my own free will and accord."

Mr Thriven paused for a burst of applause; and Mr Bairnsfather, with a smile on his face, stood up.

"It is all very well," said he, glancing to his friends, 'for Mr Thriven to pretend that no merit attaches to one who acts in the noble and generous way he has resolved to follow on this occasion. Every honest act deserves applause, were it for nothing else in the world than to keep up the credit of honesty. No doubt we might have compelled Mr Thriven to pay us out of the money to which he has succeeded, and to this extent we may admit his plea of no merit but the readiness, if not precipitancy he has exhibited on the measure is not only in itself worthy of high commendation; but, by a reflex effect, it satisfies us all, of that of which we probably were not very sceptical, that his failure was an honest one, and that he is not now making a display of paying us out of any other money than his own."

"Shall we not accord to these sentiments of our brother creditor?" said Mr Wrench, rising with great seriousness. "How seldom is it, in the ordinary affairs of life, that we find the true Mr Greatheart of 'The Pilgrim's Progress;' but when we do find him shall we not say to him let him have his reward—and what shall that reward be? Empty praise? No! Mr Thriven needs not that, because he has the voice of conscience sounding within him—far more musical, I deem, to the ear of honesty than the hollow notes of external applause. A piece of plate? very good for praise-devouring politicians to place on the table when the clique is carousing and settling the affairs of the State; but altogether unsuitable for the gratification of meek, self-denied, retiring honesty. A book of morals? what say ye to that, friends? I throw it out merely as a hint."

"And I second the suggestion," said Mr Horner, "with the amendment, that there shall be an *inscription on a blank leaf*, setting forth, in detail, the merits of the individual, and where could we find a better than the allegory of the progress of the pilgrim, written by the tinker of Elstow?"

A round of applause, fully suitable to the appetite of Mr Samuel, followed Mr Horner's amendment. The process of payment commenced, and was completed to the satisfaction of all parties; and when the creditors went away, Mr Thriven sat down to consider the position in which he stood. He had got applause, but he did not well understand it. Above all, he could not comprehend the allusion to the book written by John Bunyan. "Well," he said, as he took up the *Mercury*, "it is beyond my comprehension; and, after all, the good people may only mean to present me with some suitable gift in consideration of the act of justice I have this day done them. Let me see if there be any news;" and he fell back in his chair in that delightful *langueur d'esprit* to which a newspaper of all things is the most acceptable. "Why," he continued, as he still searched for some racy bit, "did not Sharp undertake to get a notice inserted, by way of an editor's advertisement, of three lines, to immortalize me, and pave my way to the hand of Miss Clarinda Pott?" And he wrung the muscles of his face as if they had been like a dishclout filled with the humour of his bile. At length his eye stood in his head, his mouth opened, and he became what artists would call "a living picture." The part of the paper which produced this strange effect, consisted of merely a few lines to this import:—"*New light.*—The matter which the fire in ——— Street failed to illumine has, we understand, been illustrated by no less an individual than John Bunyan, tinker at Elstow. Everything may be reduced to an allegory; the world itself is an allegory; and this scrap of ours is nothing but an allegory."

Samuel laid down the paper. "What can this mean?" said he. "If this be not an allegory, I know not what is."

"Ah, sir, you are a man this day to be envied," said Miss M'Falzen, who now entered. "You have proved yourself to be an honest man. I was sure of it; and you know, Samuel, when all deserted you, I stuck fast by you, and even gave the—the—excuse me, sir—the consent you asked

of me, while you had no prospect before you in this bad world other than beggary."

"What consent, ma'am?" replied Mr Thriven, with a face that displayed no more curiosity than it did love.

"Bless me, Mr Thriven, do you forget?—Is it possible that you can have forgotten so *interesting* an occasion?"

"I believe, by the by, ma'am, you have called for your debts," said Mr Thriven.

"Debt!" ejaculated the devout spinster. "Why should there be any debt between two people situated as we are. Why should not all claims be extinguished by the mixture of what Mr Sharp calls *the goods in communion*. If I take this money from you to-day, won't I be giving it back after the ceremony. True, my small fortune is now nothing to yours; yet I will remember with pleasure, and you will never surely forget, that all I had was at your service when you had lost all you had in the world; so, you see, my dear Samuel, if you have this day proved yourself to have a noble spirit, I am not behind you."

"What is the exact amount of your claim, Miss M'Falzen?" said Mr Thriven, with a determination to distance sentiment.

"And would you really pay it, cruel, cruel man?" said she, somewhat alarmed.

"Certainly, ma'am," replied he, drily.

"Are you serious?" said she again, looking him full and searchingly in the face.

"Yes," answered he, more drily than ever.

"Can it be possible that your sentiments towards me have undergone a change, Mr Thriven?" rejoined she. "Ah! I forgot. You are now a man of ten thousand pounds, and I have only one. The film is falling off my eyes. O deluded Angelina!"

"Then you will see the better to count the money I am to pay you," said he, attempting to laugh. "Fifty pounds, ma'am. Here it is; I will thank you for Mr Mercer's bill."

"Well, sir, since it has come to this, I will none of the money. Alas! this is the effects of John Bunyan's famous book. Good-day—good-day, Mr Samuel;" and the spinster, covering her face with her handkerchief, rushed out of the room.

Chap. VII.—The Denouement.

"Thus have I got quit of the spinster," said Mr Thriven, "and thus have I too got quit of my creditors. But how comes this? She also talks of Bunyan; everybody talks of Bunyan. But this paper? No, spite—spite—let them present me with an inscription on a blank leaf. It will do as well as a piece of plate. I will get the words of praise inserted in another newspaper, and then begin to act the gentleman in earnest on my ten thousand. I shall instantly engage a buggy with a bright bay; and a man-servant, with a stripe of silver lace round his hat, shall sit on my sinister side. Let them stare and point at me. They can only say there rides an honest man who failed, and paid his creditors twenty shillings a pound. Ho! here comes Sharp."

"What is the meaning of this?" said he, holding out the paper. "Some wretched joke of an editor who would take from me the honour intended for me by my creditors. I see by your face that you smell an action of damages.

"Joke!" echoed Sharp. "That copy of Bunyan which Miss M'Falzen was lending to Mrs Bairnsfather that day when we went to Cockenzie, is now in the hands of the Procurator Fiscal."

"Oh, the devout maiden lends it to everybody," replied Samuel. She will be to get the fiscal to reclaim sinners by it, rather than to punish them by the arm of the law."

"Is it possible, Mr Thriven, that you can thus make light of an affair that involves banishment?" said Sharp. "Did you really write on a blank leaf of that book the details of the profit you were to make of the burning?"

Samuel jumped at least three feet from the floor; and when he came down again, he muttered strange things, and did strange things, which no pen could describe, because they were unique, had no appropriate symbols in language, had never been muttered or done before since the beginning of the world, and, probably, will never be again. It might, however, have been gathered from his ravings, that he *had* some recollection of having scribbled something about his failure, but that he thought it was in the blank leaf of a pocket-book, the which book he grasped and examined, but all was a dead blank. He then threw himself on a chair, and twisted himself into all possible shapes, cursing Miss Angelina M'Falzen, himself, his creditors, every one who had the smallest share in this tremendous revolution from wealth, hopes of a high match, buggy servant with silver lace, even to disgrace, confiscation, and banishment.

"You are renowned for the quickness, loopiness, subtleness, of thy profession. Can you not assist me, Sharp? A man's scrawls are not evidence of themselves."

"But, with the testimony of Clossmuns, who has returned from Liverpool, they will be conclusive," replied the attorney, whose game now lay in Mr Samuel's misfortunes. "Such evidence never went before a jury since the time of the *regiam majestatem*."

"What then is to be done?" inquired Samuel.

"Fly! fly! and leave me a power of attorney to collect your moneys. There is two thousand of Grizel M'Whirter's fortune still to uplift—your stock in trade is to be disposed of—I will manage it beautifully for you, and, in spite of an outlawry, get the proceeds sent to you wheresoever you go."

"Dreadful relief!" ejaculated the other, "to fly one's country, and leave one's affairs in the hands of an attorney."

"Better than banishment," replied Sharp, grinding his teeth as if sharp set for the quarry that lay before him. "What do you resolve on? shall I write out the power of attorney, or will you wait till the officers are on you?" muttering to himself in conclusion—"a few six and eight-pences—i'faith I have him now!"

"Then there is no alternative?" rejoined Samuel.

"None!" replied Sharp. "I have it on good authority that the warrant against you was in the act of being written out, when I hurried here, as you find, to save you. Shall I prepare the commission?"

"Yes—yes! as quick as an ellwand that leaps three inches short of the yard."

And, while he continued in this extremity of his despair. Sharp set about writing at the factory—short and general—giving all powers of uplifting money, and reserving none. It was signed. In a few minutes more Mr Thriven was in a post-chaise, driving on to a sea-port in England. The news of the flight of the honest merchant, with all the circumstances, soon reached the ear of the devout spinster, even as she was weeping over the result of the interview she had had with her cruel lover. She wiped her eyes and repressed her sobs, and congratulated herself on the consequences of her devout labours. Mr Thriven was not heard of again · neither was his cash.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE BARLEY BANNOCK.

Between Falkirk and Stirling are the remains of a wood, even yet pretty extensive, which existed in the times of Wallace and Bruce. It is the well-known Torwood, so frequently mentioned in the histories of these Scottish heroes, and so celebrated for the shelter and concealment it afforded them on frequent occasions during their seasons of adversity. In those days, however, if we may believe old chronicles, the Torwood covered a great deal more ground than it does now; extending, on its northern side, it is said, to the banks of the Forth, a distance of about four miles. Experiencing the fate of our other ancient woods, the progress of cultivation and improvement has now greatly lessened its extent; but it forms, even in the present day, a singularly striking and impressive piece of sylvan scenery. Its outward characteristics, striking as they are, may not differ from those of other forests; but there are associations connected with the Torwood, which fill its sombre solitary depths and recesses with a profound and solemn mystery, and which diffuse throughout its picturesque glades a golden atmosphere of poetry and romance. The spirit of the olden time is there, and has flung its bewitching glamoury around the forest scene. There are few who have wandered through its green arcades, and have penetrated its far and gloomy depths, with a knowledge and recollection of the scenes which they have witnessed, and the sounds they have heard—the mustering of Wallace's patriot bands, and the stirring strains of the bugle of Bruce—few, we say, who have roamed through the dark solitudes of the Torwood, and who have thought of these things, but must have felt the fullest, the deepest effect of those sacred associations and recollections which enshrine the memory of the mighty dead.

At the period we refer to, namely, the glorious period when Bruce was struggling to complete the work which his great predecessor Wallace had begun—to compass the independence of Scotland—a rude little cottage or bothy reared its humble form on the eastern skirts of the Torwood, or rather a little way within the verge of the forest.

This lowly and lonely domicil was then occupied by a widow woman of the name of Margaret Grahame. Her husband had been killed, some years previous to the period at which we introduce her to the notice of the reader, in a skirmish with a party of the English garrison from Stirling; and she was thus left to bring up, as she best might, a family of young children; the eldest of whom, a beautiful girl, named after her mother, was only nine years of age at the time of her husband's death.

Margaret, however, was not one of those women who sink under misfortune—who unresistingly yield to the pressure of calamity. In that which had befallen her, she only saw an additional reason for redoubling those exertions in behalf of her family which had never, at any time, been wanting. After her husband's death, she continued to cultivate, with the assistance of her children, the little patch of ground, which, together with a small track of pasturage, on which two cows, her whole stock of bestial grazed, formed her only means of subsistence.

Small and humble as these means were, however, the industry and thrifty management of Margaret Graham rendered them sufficient to place herself and family beyond the reach of want. The fare, indeed, which she could put before her children, was homely enough in quality, but it was abundant.

In character, Margaret, who had been a remarkably good looking woman in her day, and who was even yet a comely dame to look upon, was, what we in Scotland, here, call "furthy." She was a lively, rattling, kind-hearted, outspoken person. Warm in her feelings, active in all her habits, and possessing a natural courage and presence of mind, that singularly fitted her for performing the duties of friendship in cases of difficulty, danger, or distress.

Such, then, was Margaret Graham, and such were the circumstances in which she was placed at the period when we bring her before the reader. These essential preliminary matters recorded, we proceed to say, that, on a certain evening, a wet and stormy one, in the month of October, 1307, as Margaret was busily employed, with the assistance of her eldest daughter—the younger children having been put to bed—in toasting some barley meal bannocks before the fire, some one rapped smartly at the door.

"Wha's there?" exclaimed Margaret, in some surprise at the lateness of the visit, and little accustomed to the calls of either friends or foes at her remote and solitary dwelling, wondering who the person could be who sought admittance. To her inquiry, a mellow-toned, but masculine voice replied—that the person without was one who had no other place of shelter to go to for the night, and who would cheerfully pay for a little refreshment, and an hour or two's shelter from the storm.

"A houseless stranger! Rin Margaret and open the door and let him in."

"I'm feart, mother," replied the timid girl, holding back and putting her finger to her mouth.

"Feart, ye little cowardly thing; what are ye feart for?" exclaimed Mrs Grahame, hastening herself to the door. "Wha wad do us ony harm, ye gowk," she continued, as she undid the fastenings of the door; "and is't fear, think ye, that's to hinder us frae gien shelter to the shelterless, or food to the hungry?"

As she uttered the last word, she flung the door widely and boldly open; and there entered a figure which might well have appalled even the stout heart of Margaret Grahame. This figure was that of a man of gigantic stature and powerful frame, wearing a steel cap and shirt of mail that glanced through the openings of a leathern doublet by which it was covered, and in some measure concealed. From a belt which passed over his right shoulder, depended a sword of dimension corresponding to the tremendous strength indicated by the proportions of the wearer; and in another belt, which passed round his middle, and which was joined in front by a silver clasp, part of whose fashioning displayed two lions' heads, was stuck a richly hilted dagger. A small silver bugle horn, which was suspended from his neck by a chair of the same metal, completed his appointments.

On the entrance of this formidable figure, the little girl uttered a scream of terror, and flew to a remote corner of

the apartment. The gigantic stranger smiled, and, turning to her mother, said—

"I am sorry that my appearance is so alarming as to make young ladies fly me. I would have them believe that I would much sooner protect than injure them. God forbid it should ever be otherwise. Come hither my little primrose, and let me assure thee of all safety at my hands." And the stranger drew out a silken purse and took from it a small gold coin, which he seemed desirous of presenting to the little fugitive fair one. He was, however, interrupted.

"Never mind her, sir; never mind her," said her mother, who now perceived that her guest was a person apparently of some note; "she'll sune learn no to be sae frichtened for the men. Sit doon, sir, sit doon. Tak a seat, and throw aff your wat jerkin, and I'll gie ye a pair o' my puir gudeman's stockins to draw on, for I'm sure ye're sockit to the skin; and a pair o' slippers to yer feet." And while the kindly-hearted and hospitable woman was thus rattling away, she was actively employed in seeking out the various comforts which she enumerated.

In a very few minutes after, the portly figure of the stranger filled the favourite arm-chair, by the fire, of Mrs Grahame's late husband, in as comfortable a plight as the hospitable attention of his hostess could place him. Several of these, however, he declined. He would not part with his boots, nor divest himself of any part of his apparel or appointments, excepting his steel cap and sword, both of which he placed on the floor close by his chair, as if desirous that they should be within reach on the slightest appearance of emergency.

"Now, my good dame," said the stranger, after enjoying for a few minutes the invigorating warmth of a blazing fire, which his hostess had heaped with faggots for his comfort, "I must be plain enough to tell ye that I am famishing of hunger, and that these barley bannocks of yours look most tempting."

"And do ye think, sir, I wasna gaun to mak ye an offer o' a tastin o' them? That wad be a gay churlish like thing, I think; I was but waitin till they war ready, to place some o' them before ye, wi' a soup milk, and a bit butter, cheese, and a cauler egg or twa. Ye'll hae them a' in ten minutes, and welcome."

"Thank you, my kind lady, thank you; and now, with your leave," added Margaret's guest, whose hunger seemed to be in one of its most most active moods—"I'll just see what state the bannocks are in;" and he stretched out his hand, took one from the fire, blew on it, tossed it quickly to and fro in his hands—for it was too hot to hold steadily—and, finally, when it had cooled a little, broke it, took a mouthful, pronounced it nearly ready, and, with great gusto, despatched the remainder.

"Dear me, man," said Mrs Grahame, who witnessed this gastronomic feat of her guest with a feeling of increased compassion for his condition; "but ye are awfu' hungry, I dare say, or ye wadna hae eaten a half-raw barley bannock that way."

"The sweetest morsel ever I ate in my life!" replied the stranger, smiling. "I'll never forget it; nor you either, my good dame."

"Pho, nonsense, man! but I see you're dreadfu' hungry;" and she commenced an active turn of the bannocks, to expedite the process of toasting.

This done, she redoubled her exertions in general preparation, and with such effect, that in a few minutes, a little round table, spread with a clean white cloth, which she placed by the elbow of her guest, was covered with the homely but wholesome edibles which she had enumerated—namely, a small basin of fresh eggs, a quarter of a cheese, a plate of butter, a large bowl of milk, and a heaped up platter of warm smoking barley bread.

"Noo, sir, set to, and do me and yoursel credit by makin a hearty supper. I'm sure ye're welcome; and I houp I needna say that again."

Obeying, without hesitation or further ceremony, the kind and cordial invitation of his hostess, the stalworth stranger commenced a vigorous attack on the tempting viands placed before him; and, had the credit of Mrs Grahame been dependant on the quantity he might consume, it was safe, for he did, indeed, make a splended meal of it.

The stranger had completed his repast, but his hostess had scarcely removed the surplus and other traces of the meal, when both were suddenly alarmed by the sound of the trampling of horses' feet from without, mingled with occasional shouts by the riders, some of mirth, and some of imprecation.

"No sound of bugle—they cannot be friends!" exclaimed Mrs Grahame's guest, starting to his feet, and seizing his sword. "Now, my good weapon," he added, as he unsheathed the shining blade, "stand me in as good stead this night as thou hast hitherto done, and thou shalt find that I will do my duty by thee."

"Fecht, sir! ye'll fecht nane," here, exclaimed Margaret Grahame, who had been, during the previous instant, listening eagerly with her ear close to the door, endeavouring to make out who or what the approaching party of horsemen were. "Fecht, ye'll fecht nane," she exclaimed, rushing up to her guest, and seizing him by the sword arm. "It wad be madness, perfect madness. It's a party o' Englishers frae Stirlin Castle. A dizzen at least; and what could your single arm, strong as it is, do against sae mony? No, no, come here, here wi' me," she added, in a state of great excitement. "Leave me to fecht the Englishers; I ken how to do't. I'll fecht them wi' barley bannocks and dauds o' butter. Keep thae chiels chowan, and deil a haet else they'll think o'."

By this time Margaret Grahame had conducted, or rather dragged her guest, who passively, and, it may be added, prudently yielded to her proceeding, into a dark back apartment. This gained, she hastily threw aside the curtain of a bed, which occupied a corner of the room, opened a *press* or closet, the door of which the former concealed, and unceremoniously thrust her guest, without saying another word, into the unoccupied receptacle, fastened the door, and drew the curtains of the bed again before it.

All this was the work of but an instant, and there was need that it should be so; for the English troopers—for such they were—were already thundering at the door for admittance.

"Comin this moment!" exclaimed Margaret Grahame, "Dear me, will ye no gie folk time to throw on their claes," she added, as she undid the fastenings of the door. "To raise folk out o' their beds this way at this time o' nicht."

As she said this, she threw the door open, and, in the same instant, six or eight dismounted troopers, who had given their horses' in charge to two or three comrades, who remained mounted outside, entered.

On the entrance of the soldiers, Margaret Grahame, in pursuance of the particular line of tactics which she had laid down for herself, commenced, with great volubility of speech, to overwhelm her visiters with both words and deeds of hospitality—she stirred the fire to warm them, and covered her homely board with the best she had to regale them, and all this with such expedition, accompanied by such an outpouring of expressions of kindness, that the soldiers could do nothing but look at each other in surprise, and, by their smiles, express the perplexity into which such an unexpected reception had placed them.

One obvious general effect, however, was produced on them all by Margaret's proceedings: this was the com-

pletely disarming them of all vindictive feeling, and substituting in its place one of kindness and sympathy.

Pressed by their hostess, and nothing loth themselves, the soldiers now sat down to the well-spread board which the former's hospitality had prepared for them, and ate heartily; those first served giving place to their comrades, until the whole had partaken of the widow's good cheer.

This done, the soldiers, though not without apologies for the rudeness which their duty imposed on them, informed Margaret Grahame that the purpose of their visit was to search her house for a certain important personage—not naming him—who, they had information, had been seen in that neighbourhood in the course of the day.

Having given her this intimation, the soldiers, attended by Margaret herself, proceeded to search the house, but in a temper so mollified by the kind treatment they had received, that they went through the process more as a matter of form than duty.

On completing their brief and cursory search, the troopers, after thanking their hostess for her hospitality, remounted their horses and departed.

It was not for some time after they were gone that Margaret Grahame ventured to seek the hidingplace of her first guest of the evening. There were two reasons for this delay. The first was to ensure the perfect safety of the latter, by allowing her late visiters to get to a secure distance. the other was one of a less definite and more perplexing nature. From some expressions which had dropped from the troopers in the course of their search, she had now no doubt that her concealed guest was no other than Robert Bruce.

It was under this impression then, and under the feeling of reverential awe that it inspired, that Margaret Grahame at length went to intimate to her concealed guest that the troopers were gone, and that he might now come forth from his hidingplace.

On the latter's stepping from his concealment, Margaret flung herself on her knees, and calling him her King, implored his pardon for the homely and familiar manner in which, in ignorance of his quality, she had treated him.

"So, my good dame," replied Bruce, smiling—for it was indeed he—and taking his hostess kindly by the hand, and raising her from her humble position, "so you have discovered me? These troopers have blabbed, I fancy. Well, my secret could not be in safer keeping, I feel assured, than in thine, my kind hostess. It is even so. I *am* Robert Bruce, and none other."

Overcome by the various and tumultuous feelings which the incident, altogether, was so well calculated to excite, Margaret Grahame burst into tears, and, raising the corner of her apron to her eyes, stood thus for some seconds without uttering a word.

Bruce, affected, even to the starting of a tear, took his hostess again by the hand, and, not without very evident emotion, said—"Come, my good dame, why those tears?"

"I canna richtly tell mysel, sir. I dinna ken. I canna help it. Maybe it is to see you in this plight—to see Scotland's chief without a single attendant, and glad o' the shelter o' sae lowly a roof as mine."

"Pho, pho, my kind hostess, and what is in that?" replied Bruce, in a cheering tone. "We must all rough it out as we best can in these times, king and cobbler, baron and beggar. Better days are coming, and we will then think of our present hardships only to laugh at them. As to attendants," he added, with a look of peculiar intelligence, "I am not, perhaps, so destitute of them as I may seem; although they are not, it may be, within calling at this moment. Half-an-hour's walk into the Torwood, however, and half-a-dozen blasts of this little horn, would bring around me a band of as stalworth, nay, as brave hearts as Scotland can boast."

"God be thankit for that! said Bruce's enthusiastic hostess. "Then there is hope yet."

"There is, there is. A day of reckoning is coming. But now, my good dame," he added, glancing at a little window through which the dull, faint light of the breaking day had just begun to gleam, "I must take my departure. I must be at the mustering place an hour after day-break." Saying this the redoubted warrior drew out a leathern purse, from whence he took several pieces of gold coin, which he vainly endeavoured to press on the acceptance of his hostess.

"Well, well, my good dame," he said, on finding his urgency only gave offence, "We'll settle all this on some future day. Depend upon it *I* will not forget the score which stands against me here. In the meantime, farewell, and fare ye well too, my little maiden," he said, taking his hostess's daughter by the hand; "you and I will meet again." Having said this, and having once more bid mother and daughter adieu, Bruce left the house, and soon after disappeared in the depths of the Torwood.

Margaret Grahame stood at the door, and, with the corner of her apron at her eye, looked after the stately figure of the patriot chief, as long as it remained in sight. When it had disappeared, she returned into the house, and began, as she busied herself in brushing up, or, as she would herself have called it, "redding" up her little cottage, after the hospitalities of which it had been the scene, in *crooning* a popular Scottish ditty of the day, of which the two first verses ran thus,

"Guid speed the wark o' bow and brand
That's raised for Scotland's weal,
And blessins on the heart and hand
O' the ever true and leal.

"Come frae the east, come frae the west,
Come frae the south and north;
For Bruce's horn has blawn a blast
That's heard frae Clyde to Forth.
Guid speed the wark," &c.

Here, we beg to apprise the reader, the first act of our little drama closes—the curtain drops; and when we again raise it, years have passed away, and many things have undergone those changes which the lapse of time so certainly produces.

During the interval to which we allude—an interval of eight or ten years, Scotland, after a long and arduous struggle, had achieved her independence, and Bruce was now in secure and peaceable possession of the Scottish crown.

To all, however, the changes which had taken place had not been equally fortunate or favourable. On many the sanguinary and ruthless warfare which had desolated the country brought poverty and ruin.

Amongst the sufferers of this description was Margaret Grahame. About three years after the occurrence of the incidents which occupy the preceding columns, a party of English soldiers had first plundered and then burned her little cottage, driving herself and family forth on the world, to earn a livelihood as they best might, or to subsist, if other means failed, on the scanty doles of charity.

On being driven from her home, Margaret Grahame, followed by her children, in melancholy procession, wandered she knew nor cared not whither; but, instinctively, taking that direction which promised to leave further danger at the greatest distance behind her. This direction was westward, and on this route she continued; subsisting by the way on the benevolence of the humane; more of whom, however, were more willing than able to relieve her, till she reached the neighbourhood of the village of Kilpatrick, on the Clyde. Exhausted with

fatigue, and famishing with hunger, the widow and her children here applied at a respectable farm-house, which stood a little way off the road, for relief.

The door was opened by the farmer himself, a man of mild and benevolent disposition. To him, therefore, the petition of the destitute widow was not proferred in vain. Herself and children were instantly admitted, and a plenteous meal of bread, and cheese, and milk, placed before them.

When the famishing family had satisfied the cravings of hunger, the farmer, whose name was Blackadder, inquired, but in the most delicate manner possible, into the history of the widow. She told him her story. When she had concluded, Blackadder, looking at her two sons, said that they were fine stout boys, and that he thought, if she chose, he could find them employment about his farm.

"Ye're kind, sir, very kind," replied the widow; "but I'm sweart to part wi' my bairns. Destitute as I am, I canna think o' separatin frae them."

"But there's no occasion for that either," replied the farmer. "I'm willin, in consideration o' their services, to gie ye a bit sma' cot to live in, and ye'll never want a pickle meal, and a soup milk forbye. And for this bonnie lassie, here," he added, and now looking at Margaret, who had grown into a tall and handsome girl, "she micht mak hersel useful about my house too, for which, of course, I wad gie her the wages gaun. Ye micht then be a' comfortable aneuch, for a wee, at ony rate."

Need we say that the kind offers of Blackadder were readily closed with. We think we need not. The grateful family, the children by looks of glee and satisfaction, and the mother by broken sentences and tears of joy, acknowledged their deep sense of the obligation proposed to be conferred on them.

"And wha kens," said the farmer, on this matter being settled, "an' wha kens," he said, smiling, "but this bonny lassie here," laying his hand on Margaret's shoulder, "may sune fa' in wi' a bit canny guidman hereawa, wi' a weel-stocked mailin."

"I doot, sir, that's a' settled already," replied the widow, smiling, "although there's but little gear in the case. Marget, I'm jalousin, has left her heart at the Torwood. There's a certain young lad, a farmer's son there, that I'm thinkin she wadna willingly forget. But want o' warl's gear aften sunders fond hearts."

"Better times may come roun, guidwife," replied Mr Blackadder; "an' the lass may get her leman for a'."

During this conversation, the subject of it seemed in an agony of maidenly distress. With a face burning with blushes, she vainly attempted, with a series of unconnected interjections, amongst which were several *denials* of the *fact* to arrest her mother's communications regarding the secrets of her heart. Finding these efforts ineffectual, the bashful girl retreated behind her mother's chair, and there, concealing herself as much as possible, awaited, in suffering silence, the conclusion of the, to her, most annoying discussion.

In less than a week from this period, Widow Grahame was comfortably domiciled in a small cot-house at a little distance from the residence of her benefactor, Blackadder. Here, contented with her humble lot, and grateful to a kind Providence, which had so timeously interposed in her behalf, Margaret Grahame plied her wheel the live long day, singing as merrily, the while, as the "laverock in the lift." Her boys were giving every satisfaction to their employer, and her daughter was no less successful in pleasing in her department. She was thus in the enjoyment of one of the greatest happinesses of which her condition was susceptible, and she fully appreciated the blessing. It was while matters were in this state with Widow Grahame, and somewhere about two years after she had settled at Kilpatrick, that her eldest son said to her one evening, on returning home after the labours of the day were over:—

"Mother, they say the King has come to Cardross Castle, and I believe its true; for I saw, frae the braes, a great cavalcade o' knights and gentlemen on horseback, doon on the Glasgow road, gaun towards Dumbarton as hard's they could bir."

"An' what's that to me, laddie, whar the King, God bless him, is?" replied his mother. "I'm aye blythe to hear o' his weelfare, for auld lang syne; but what mair is there aboot it?"

"I dinna ken, mother," said the boy; "but I've been thinkin that if he kent you were here, or kent whar to fin ye, he wad maybe let you see that he hadna forgotten the barley meal bannocks o' the Torwood, that ye hae sae aften tell't us aboot."

"Tuts, ye fulish boy," replied his mother, plying away at her wheel. "Whatna notion is that? The King, honest man, has, I daresay, forgotten baith me and my bannocks many a day syne. He had owre muckle to do and owre muckle to think o' after that, to keep ony mind o' sae sma and ordinary a matter as that. The *recollection* o' that nicht, Jamie, is, at onyrate, reward aneuch for me."

"Feth, I dinna ken, mither," said the pertinacious youngster; "but I think ye micht do waur than try. Ye micht do waur than tak a stap doun to Cardross Castle—its only about seven or aucht miles frae this, and get a sicht o' the King, an' tell him wha ye are. It micht do us a' guid."

To this very distinct and rational proposition, Margaret made no reply. It threw her into a musing mood, in which she continued for some time; making the wheel revolve, the while, with redoubled velocity. At length, studiously, as it appeared, avoiding all recurrence to the subject on which her son and herself had been speaking.

"Tak your bread and milk, Jamie, and gang to your bed. Ye ken ye hae to rise by three the morn's mornin."

The boy, without further urging his proposal, or saying anything more regarding it, did as he was desired—eat his bread and milk, and retired to bed, where he quickly fell fast asleep. His mother, on ascertaining that he had done so, got up from her wheel, went to a small wooden tub that stood in a corner of the cottage, and filled from it a small basin of barley meal. With this meal she forthwith proceeded to bake a bannock of small size, which she subsequently toasted with great care. This done, she placed it in a cupboard, and soon after retired to bed. On the following morning, at an early hour, Margaret Grahame, dressed in her best, and carrying in her hand the identical barley meal bannock above spoken of, neatly wrapped up in a snow-white towel, was seen posting stoutly along the Dumbarton road, and evidently bent on a journey of some length. It was so, Margaret was making for Cardross Castle, where she arrived about three hours after leaving her own house. On reaching the outer gate of the castle, Margaret addressed herself to a sentinel who was walking backwards and forwards with a drawn sword in his hand.

"Is the King here, sir, just now?" she said.

"He is," replied the man, shortly.

"Could I see him, sir, do you think?"

'Indeed, mistress, I think you could *not*," replied the sentinel, peremptorily. "None but properly accredited persons can obtain access to him at present."

"I'm sure, however he wad be glad aneuch to see me,' said Margaret; "for him and I are auld acquantance."

"Perhaps so," replied the soldier. "Of that I know nothing; but I know my duty, and that is to keep out all unknown and unaccredited persons. But here's Balcanquhail, the King's confidential personal attendant, and you may speak to him if you like. Ho, Balcanquhail here's a

woman who claims *old acquaintanceship"* (a smile accompanying, and intelligent emphasis laid on these two words) "with the King, and who wants admittance to his Majesty,' added the sentinel, beckoning her towards him, and now addressing the person whom he named.

"You cannot be admitted, honest woman," said Balcanquhail, scanning the supplicant with something of a contemptuous expression of face. "You cannot on any account, so its no use insisting."

"Weel, sir," replied Margaret, calmly, "if ye winna let mysel in, will ye tak in this to the King?" and she presented the white towel with its inclosure to the "chaumer chiel," of Robert Bruce. "Let the King hae that, and, if I'm no mista'en, ye'll sune hae orders to fling a' the gates o' the castle open to me."

"What is it?" said Balcanquhail, peering curiously into the folds of the towel.

"Atweel its neither mair nor less," replied the widow, "than a barley meal bannock. Nae very rare nor costly commodity; but place ye't before the King, and he'll understand what it means. I'll wait here till ye come back."

Accustomed to such symbolical communications, which were much resorted to in these days, and sometimes on very important occasions, Balcanquhail readily agreed, without further inquiry or remark, to comply with the widow's request.

Hastening to the King's private apartment—the King being at the moment at breakfast—Balcanquhail placed his charge on the table before him, in the precise state in which he received it, without saying a word.

"What's this, Balcanquhail?" said Bruce, opening out the towel as he spoke, and without waiting for a reply. "Ah! a barley bannock. What can this mean?" and he mused for an instant. Then suddenly starting from his seat—"I have it!—I have it!" he exclaimed, with eager delight. "How should I forget the barley bannocks of the 'Torwood?' Who brought this bannock, Balcanquhail? Where is the person who brought it?" Balcanquhail informed him.

"Send her up to me instantly—instantly!" rejoined the excited monarch. "This is the good woman about whom I have been so anxiously, but vainly, inquiring for these two or three years back. Quick, quick, bring her hither, Balcanquhail?"

In less than two minutes afterwards, Margaret Grahame was in the presence of her Sovereign. On her entrance, the King hastened towards her with extended hand, and after giving her a cordial welcome:—

"Where in all the world hast thou been my good dame?" he said, "that I have not been able to find thee, although I have had emissaries employed from time to time, in all directions, for the last three or four years, to trace thee out, with the offer of a reward to him who should first discover thee? No one about thy old place of residence—whither I went myself to seek thee—could tell aught of thee. They knew not what had become of thee, nor where thou hadst gone to. Where, on earth, hast thou been?"

Margaret gave the history of her whole proceedings, and of all that had happened her since the eventful night on which she had entertained the King in her little cot on the skirts of the Torwood.

When she was done, Bruce, with many expressions of kindness, presented her with a large purse of gold for her present exigencies. He subsequently built her a handsome mansion-house, where she lived in comfort and independence for many years, on the site of her ruined cottage—a locality which he chose in order to commemorate the event which forms the ground of this tale—gave her a charter of three or four extensive farms that lay around it, dowered her daughter, Margaret Grahame, who was, by this means enabled to wed the man of her choice, and, finally, placed her two sons in situations of profit and trust about his own person.

And so, gentle reader, ends the story of the "Barley Bannock."

THE RETURNED LETTER.

We all know that great endings have often had but small beginnings; that most serious consequences have often arisen from very trifling incidents. This, we say, we all know. Yet there may be some who would deny the fact. If there be, let them read the following account of a particular passage in the life of Mr John Manderston, and let them, at the same time, take warning by it:—

Mr John Mandertson, who was an ironmonger to business, sat him down one day, at the period to which our story refers, to indite a letter to a certain Mr David Morrison; the said David Morrison being then resident in the city of Glasgow. The purpose of this letter, which we shall shortly place before the reader, was to remind Mr David Morrison of an old debt due to the writer, and demanding payment thereof. These were the terms of the document in question:—

"*Heatherbraes, 24th August*, 1813.

"Mr David Morrison,

"Sir,—Your old dett which you o me, is now long standing for about seven years; and as you are now, I here, in good circumstances, I houpe you will immediately remit me the same, which is £9 : 14 : 4½., for various artikles furnished you in my line.

"I am, Sir,

"Your obed. Serv.,

"John Manderston."

Having duly folded, sealed, and addressed this letter, John took it to the post-office, and, with his own hands, popped it into the slip. This done, John patiently awaited the result. His claim on Mr David Morrison, we need hardly say, was a just one, and had, indeed, been long owing, as set forth in the letter of demand. John, therefore, reasonably expected that his application would produce something—and, *certes*, it did.

On the third day after Mr Manderston had written and dispatched the letter in question, he was very much surprised, and very much pleased, to be presented, by the postman with a very promising-looking packet, on which was a charge of one shilling and fourpence halfpenny of postage. This charge, not doubting that the packet spoken of contained a remittance from his old debtor, Morrison, Mr Manderston cheerfully paid.

"One shilling and fourpence ha'penny, Archy!" he said, addressing the postman in a chuckling voice, and with a smiling countenance. "I'll pay you the money, my man!" and he drew out the drawer of his till, with a jerk of unusual promptitude and readiness, paid the postage, and retired to his little desk, to open, and feast on the contents of his packet.

Mr Manderston, however, went to work cautiously and deliberately in this matter, as if to prolong the enjoyment of pleasing anticipation. He first broke one seal, and then another—for the packet was carefully secured—and then slowly unfolded the envelope—an operation which he fully expected would disclose to his longing eyes the impressive appearance of a bank-note of respectable amount. But what was his surprise and disappointment to find that the envelope, which he had just unfolded, enclosed only a letter! This letter, however, John immediately opened, without looking at the superscription, and read—

"Sir,—Your old dett which you o me is now long standing—for about seven years, and"——Here John brought up all at once. Paused. A sudden light had broke in upon him. He discovered that he was reading his own letter—the identical letter he had sent, three days before, to his debtor, Morrison.

"What could this mean? No remittance; but in place of that, his own letter back. Most extraordinary! Mr Manderston now turned his attention to the outside of the letter, and there discovered the word *refused* written in red ink in a scrawling hand.

"Ah, refused!" he exclaimed, in a tone of bitter indignation. "The scoundrel. To swindle me out of my money, and now to refuse my letter; and to subject me, moreover, to a double postage." It was a very provoking case; and deep was the resentment, fierce the ire of Mr Manderston, as he contemplated, in all its bearings, the ungrateful, ungracious proceeding. But peace-loving and rest-loving man as John was, he determined to bestir himself on the present occasion, and not to allow the slight put upon him by his debtor, Morrison, to go unresented. John determined on revenge; but in what shape, of what description should it be? This was a question; for the debtor was a discharged bankrupt, and, moreover, a wily rogue, so there was no safety in dealing with him "according to law;" that is, in prosecuting. Such a proceeding might only make bad worse, by hooking John in for the expenses, without effecting the recovery of a penny of the principal. It might. Then what was to be done? Mr Manderston was a good deal at a loss. At length, however, a bright idea struck him; and John chuckled over it, for there was some mischievous humour in it; at least so there appeared to be to John himself, who, we need hardly say, was not very bright either in *repartie* or retaliation, or indeed in anything else. The idea alluded to, was to send his letter back again to Morrison under a cover, which should also enclose the envelope in which it came to himself, and thus to subject his debtor in triple postage.

No sooner conceived than executed. Delighted with the ingenuity of the contrivance, Mr Manderston immediately made up the cunning packet, addressed it, disguising his hand as much as he could, and dispatched it.

For a whole week after, Mr Manderston enjoyed, undisturbed, the pleasing notion that he had *done* his correspondent; for, on this he presumed after the second day, seeing that there was no return in that time. He had no doubt, therefore, that Morrison had bitten.

For a whole week, then, we say, Mr Manderston enjoyed, undisturbed, all the felicity which this circumstance was capable of affording. At the end of that time, however, an event occurred which shewed, that the thing had not gone off either quite so quietly or so satisfactorily as John had fondly imagined. A thickish letter, postage free, however, was put into Mr Manderston's hand by the postman. He wondered where it could be from, and what it could be about, and still more did he wonder when he read on the back, in large plain print, the words—"On His Majesty's service." An order for ironmongery, thought Mr Manderston, for some barracks or other. Thus thinking, John broke the large official seal with which the letter was secured, and found several documents enclosed. He took out one, opened it, and read—

"Sir,—Your old debt which you owe me is now long standing—for about seven years, and"—— Here, as on a former occasion, Mr Manderston stopped short, looked a little pale, and got a little confused. What could *this* mean. His letter again. It was rather alarming; it was so, from its appearing under such circumstances, under cover of an official, a government envelope. Rather serious.

There was an official letter also, inside. Mr Manderston took it up, opened it, and found it to be to the following effect:—

"Sir,—The enclosed letters having been refused by the person to whom they are addressed. I have to request that you make immediate payment of the several postages, on the letters in question, amounting in all to 3s. 4½d., to the postmaster of your place, otherwise legal proceedings will be forthwith entered into against you for recovery of the same.

"I am, sir, &c."

Mr Manderston was struck dumb; at least it would have been seen that he was so, had anybody been present; but there being none, he had no occasion to speak. It was some moments too before he could even think on the very odd affair thus so unexpectedly thrust upon him; that is, think of it in any useful or connected way. At length, however, he began to take a regular and deliberate view of the matter in all its bearings, and finally emerged from the brown study into which it had thrown him with a clear conviction that he was ill used in the matter: that Morrison had behaved villanously; and that he had no right to pay the 3s. 4½d. demanded, and that he *would* not pay it, he firmly resolved.

Full at once of this determination, and of the gross injustice attempted to be done him, Mr Manderston immediately took pen in hand, and commenced inditing a memorial to the post-master at Edinburgh, setting forth, in the following terms, the hardship of his case, together with an expression of the resolution above alluded to; that is, the resolution *not* to pay.

"Sir,"—began this pithy document—"I have receive yours, in which you demand from me three shillins and forpence hapeny for postig for a leter I sent to Mr Morrison, Glasgow, who has been owin me a det of long standing—for seven years—demanding the payment of my just and laful det; and he refused it, because he wishes to avoid payment of his laful dets, although justly owin, with interest and expenses. I will not, therefore, pay the money you demand, as I think it unjust and unreasonable that I should be obliged to pay for askin my on, which is due me, as I have said, by Morrison, which got value in ironmongry and other guds, as I can well prove by my buks.

"I am, sir, &c."

"P.S. I am determine not to pay the 3s. 4½d., you must go to Morrison for it, which is bound to pay it."

Having folded and sealed this concise, clear, and felicitously expressed memorial and remonstrance, Mr Manderston addressed it "To the Post-master of the city of Edinburgh;" and dispatched it to its destination, in full assurance that he should hear no more of it. In this opinion, three days of entire silence confirmed him; but the fourth brought an awakener: it came in the shape of a letter—a sufficiently polite one, however—from the Post-Office at Edinburgh, acknowledging receipt of his epistle, but refusing to forego the claim of 3s. 4½d.

"The letters to which your communication alludes," said this official document, "having been refused by the party to whom they were addressed, you, as the writer thereof, are liable in the postage as charged, agreeably to the regulation of this office. You will, therefore, please order immediate payment of the amount, (3s. 4½d.) otherwise, I regret to say, the case will be put forthwith into the hands of our solicitor for instant prosecution.

(Signed) "Secretary."

The matter was getting serious then; Mr Manderston thought it so; but still his resolution not to pay remained unshaken. How to proceed next in the business, however, puzzled him. He had now exhausted all his resources and all his ingenuity, in so far as these were applicable to the affair in hand. Mr Manderston, in short, was at his wits end as regarded it.

In this dilemma he bethought him of applying to his solicitor for advice and assistance.

Having come to this determination, he took down his hat, put it on, told his boy to keep a sharp look-out on the shop, and proceeded straightway to the house of his legal friend, Mr Snoddy, carrying with him all the letters and papers relating to the case on which he was about to consult him.

On being ushered into the writing-room of the man of law—"Be seated, my dear sir, be seated," said the latter—perceiving that there was a look of business about his visiter. "Anything to do in my way?" added Mr Snoddy, laughingly, and rubbing his hands with professional glee. "Anything to do in my way, my dear sir?"

Mr Manderston, with a gravity of face which contrasted rather strongly with the smiling countenance of the lawyer, replied, that there *was* a small matter regarding which he wished to consult him; and forthwith proceeded to state his case, producing, at the same time, the various documents which its progress had accumulated. Having patiently listened to the former, and carefully perused the latter, Mr Snoddy rested his head upon his left hand, and gave himself up for a few seconds to profound thought. This imposing ceremony gone through, he suddenly resumed his natural lively manner, and said—

"Well, my dear sir, I see very plainly what we are to do in this case: we will pay the 3s. 4½d."

"We'll do no such thing," here vehemently interposed Mr Manderston.

"Patience, my good sir—patience," said Mr Snoddy, holding up his hand deprecatingly—"till I explain. We will pay the 3s. 4½d. to the Post-Office; because, if we don't, they will enforce it with expenses, they having nothing to do between you and Morrison, but merely to look to the writer of the letter or letters, for the postage or postages thereof. But, having paid it, we have then good grounds of action against Morrison for recovery of the same, with interest and charges; don't you see? And when we have brought the matter into this shape, leave me alone for sweating him. I'll stir him up with a long pole, I warrant ye."

To Mr Manderston this view of the case gave great satisfaction; and had, besides, the effect of reconciling him to paying, at least in the meantime, the 3s. 4½d. demanded by the Post-Office. This was accordingly done, and proceedings instantly entered into against Morrison.

In about a week after this, Mr Snoddy called on Mr Manderston, with a bundle of papers in his hand; and looking very grave and business-like—even before he spoke a word—Mr Manderston saw there was something wrong; he was, therefore, in some measure prepared for the following communication, thus prefaced, from Mr Snoddy:—

"That fellow, Morrison," he said, looking fierce, "is going to be troublesome, I doubt. He has employed a man of business to defend. Here are two letters I have had from that person on the subject, in answer to two of mine, of which here are the two copies; and here, also, is a scroll of another letter which I mean to dispatch this afternoon, in answer to the Glasgow writer's last, and I think it'll be a settler."

Having said this, Mr Snoddy placed the various documents he alluded to, *seriatim*, before his client, and invited him to look over them.

Mr Manderston, without saying a word, went to his little desk, took therefrom his spectacles, put them leisurely, and solemnly on his nose, and commenced a deliberate perusal of the different papers submitted to him; Mr Snoddy standing by, with his hat in his hand—for he was warm—wiping the perspiration from his forehead with his handkerchief, and looking terribly ferocious—this said ferocity being directed against Morrison and his law-agent.

"But you have'nt looked over the scroll of the letter I mean to send to-day, Mr Manderston," said Mr Snoddy, seeing that the former paused in his labours as if he had finished, without having looked at the document in question. "It's, I think, a settler, as I said," continued Mr Snoddy. "It's a complete summing up of the whole case, embodying all that has been or can be said on the subject, and shewing, I imagine, very clearly, that we have the right end of the string. But I'll read it for you, my dear sir;" and Mr Snoddy, taking up the very formidable scroll began:—

"Sir,—The case of Manderston *versus* Morrison, your client arose, as you are well aware, from the circumstance of Mr Manderston addressing a letter to Morrison, dated the 24th of August, 1813, craving, as he was well entitled to do, payment of a just and lawful debt due to him by the said Morrison"——

"Exactly," here interposed Manderston, "just and lawful, and *long owing*."

"Yes, my dear sir, we'll come to that immediately," replied Mr Snoddy, "a letter craving, as he was well entitled to do"—continued the latter, resuming his reading—"payment of a just and lawful debt due to him by the said Morrison; of which letter, the following is a literal copy:—

"*Heatherbraes, 24th August,* 1813.

"Sir,—Your old debt which you owe me is now long standing—for about seven years"——

"Precisely," here again interrupted Mr Manderston. "That's just what I said. The very words to a hair."

"A copy from your own holograph, my dear sir, which I have in my possession," said Mr Snoddy.

"My what?" inquired Mr Manderston.

"Your holograph, my dear sir," said the writer.

"What's that?" rejoined Mr Manderston.

"Your handwriting—the original letter you wrote Morrison.

"Ou ay, ou ay!" replied the now enlightened penman.

Mr Snoddy now proceeded, but we need not, to finish the copy of Manderston's "holograph." He then passed on to further statements of facts and finally concluded with three close written pages of argument, filled with law and logic. It was, in fact, a masterpiece, and well entitled to the eulogium which the writer had passed on it when he called it a settler.

When he had finished——

"Juist sae," said Mr Manderston. "It seems to me a gay steeve, pithy piece o' writin. Ye hit him gayin hard in twa or three places."

"I think I do!" replied Mr Snoddy, smiling complacently, and folding up the "pithy piece o' writin," with a triumphant flourish.

"That'll surely bring them to their senses!" said Mr Manderston.

"I should think so!" replied Mr Snoddy, with a confident simper.

"Weel, despatch't as fast's ye can!" said Mr Manderston. "Keep the puddin het, and dinna gie them a moment's respite. They'll no fin' John Manderston gie in so ready as they think."

Thus encouraged, Mr Snoddy lost no time in firing off the great gun, which he had just charged against the

enemy. It had not, however, by any means the effect hoped for by that very acute lawyer; quite the contrary: its only result was to bring back a reply of twice its length, stating facts also, but arriving at very different conclusions, and breathing in every line the most contemptuous defiance.

On receipt of this reply, Mr Snoddy, as in duty bound, waited on his client, and laid it before him, saying, as he did so—"The scoundrel is going to defend."

Mr Manderston adjusted his spectacles on his nose, and, with the same gravity and earnestness as before, began to read the reply.

When he had finished—"What's to be done noo, then, Mr Snoddy?" he said, raising his spectacles on his forehead, and looking his man of business earnestly in the face. "We maun on nae account gie in—I'm determined on that."

"Why, I fancy," replied Mr Snoddy, "we must carry it into court. The expenses on the case are already considerable, and it would be a pity to lose them."

"We'll *no* lose them, if there's justice to be had for love or money," said Mr Manderston, reddening with anger. "Into court wi' them by a' means, and let's hae a warsle wi' them there."

Thus instructed, Mr Snoddy lost no time in taking the necessary steps for bringing the case of Manderston *versus* Morrison before the Sheriff. These steps gone through, the day and hour of cause was anxiously waited for.

They came, both the one and the other; and when they did, they found Mr Snoddy at his post. Mr Snoddy did for his client all that man could do; but what availed it: the Sheriff held that no man was bound to receive a letter unless he chose it, on whatever ground or pretence it might be sent, and decerned, with expenses, against the pursuer.

It was to no purpose that Mr Snoddy urged the reasonableness of his client's application to his creditor, by letter, for payment of his debt; and in proof of the *bona fide* nature of the transaction, read to the court Mr Manderston's first letter to Morrison, the original cause of the whole proceeding commencing:—"Sir, your old debt which you owe me is now long standing—for about seven years."

It was to no purpose, we say, that Mr Snoddy did all this, and a great deal more. Judgment went against him, and the enemy was victorious. This defeat was heavy news for Mr Snoddy to bring home to Mr Manderston; but he did bring them home to that gentleman, nevertheless, and said it was most "unfortunate," and, "he would add, most iniquitous."

Mr Manderston thought so too, and said he was still determined not to lose his 3s. 4½d. Mr Snoddy said he was right; and added, that he was sure if the case was brought before the Court of Session; justice would still be obtained; that they would get a decision in their favour, with costs.

It was a great and important day for Manderston, the 31st day of the month after the events which we have just recorded took place.

On that day Mr Manderston was up at an unusually early hour of the morning, and, shortly after, appeared on the main street of Heatherbraes, dressed in his best, carrying a small bundle under his arm, whose outward covering was a bright yellow silk handkerchief, and wending his way towards the "Hen and Chickens Inn," from whence the "Fly Jack and Begone" light coach started for Edinburgh.

On reaching the yard of the inn, Mr Manderston was joined by a gentleman in a new full suit of blacks, and otherwise evidently pinked out for some great occasion. It was Mr Snoddy.

On this day the returned letter case was to come before the Lords of Session; and the lawyer and his client were now on their way to the metropolis to be present at the trial.

Having taken their seats in the vehicle with the curious compound name, the two gentlemen were soon at their destination, and were shortly afterwards seen—Mr Snoddy piloting the way, and Mr Manderston *stavering* after him—working their way through the crowded Parliament House—the buzz and bustle of which greatly surprised and confounded the unsophisticated ironmonger, who had never been there before.

Mr Snoddy having now conducted his client into the division where his case was to be tried, whispered two or three words into his ear; and, by dint of some dragging, hauling, and pushing, succeeded in getting him snugly planted in a seat directly behind that usually occupied by the legal gentlemen interested in the proceedings before the Court.

Having thus disposed of his client, Mr Snoddy disappeared, but, soon after, returned, and, stretching across the seats, so as to get as near Mr Manderston as possible, informed, in a whisper, "that *the* case was just coming on." It came on, and one of the most brilliant speeches that ever was heard within the walls of that court-house, was delivered, on this occasion, by the counsel employed by Mr Snoddy for Mr Manderston's interest. The counsel opened the case by calling it one of the most important and extraordinary, and, he said, "he did not hesitate to add, one of the most infamous, on the part of the defenders, that ever, perhaps, came before their Lordships." He then proceeded to state the grounds on which the action was brought.

"Nothing," he said, "could be more reasonable in its purpose, nothing more mild in its terms, than his client's letter to Morrison. But, my Lords," he continued, "I do not wish your Lordships to take my unsupported assertion on this point: I will read to your Lordships the letter itself, which I am fortunate enough to have in my possession.

"It is dated, your Lordships"—went on the eloquent counsel, now looking on a paper which he had dug out from a mass of documents before him, and, at this moment, held open in his hand—"It is dated, your Lordships, '*Heatherbraes*, 24th *August*, 1813,' and runs thus:—'Sir,—your old debt which you owe me, is now long standing—for about seven years, and'"——

"Exactly—precisely, sir. That's the identical letter, word for word"—here spoke out some one, in an audible voice, from the seat behind the counsel who was speaking, to the great surprise of the Court, and to the interruption of its proceedings.

It was Mr Manderston. His counsel looked at him reprovingly; Mr Snoddy stretched his hand towards him deprecatingly; and the bench admonished him severely.

Harmony restored, the case went on, came to a close and—is the reader prepared for such a catastrophe—was decided, once more, in favour of the defenders.

Mr Manderston returned home, settled the costs of his case, including Mr Snoddy's account, and found, in summing up the various items of his outlay in this affair, that he had paid, altogether £114 : 13 : 9 for the Returned letter.

WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE SMUGGLER'S SON.

"'The Philistines are out!' cries Will. 'We'll take no heed on't.'
Attacked, whose the man that would flinch from his gun?
Should my head be blown off, I shall ne'er feel the need on't.
We'll fight while we can; when we can't, boys, we'll run!'"
Will Watch.

'Twas midnight. The hollow wind howled around the cabin of Martin Kennedy, the most daring smuggler on the coast of Carrick. A female figure stood within the doorway, gazing wistfully over the dark and foaming waters which lashed the shore a short distance from her feet. It was Helen, the smuggler's wife. For hours before, till now, she had stood alone amidst the storm, braving its fury, anxious to catch the first glimpse of the little skiff which contained all that was dear to her on earth—her husband and her son. Amid the darkness, to which she had familiarized her eyesight, she could detect a vessel on the waters at the distance of about half a league. Well did she know that vessel was on the watch for Martin Kennedy; for Lieutenant Fairfax, its commander, owed him and his a deadly grudge.

Some years previous, the lieutenant had, while on a visit to a friend in Ayrshire, cast eyes upon a lovely girl, a daughter of a cotter on his friend's estate. He wooed and won her; for what power hath innocence and beauty, while "steeped in poverty to the very lips," against him on whom Fortune hath showered her choicest favours? Captain Mowbray—for such was the appellation Lieutenant Fairfax then assumed—was a wealthy and a handsome man; and, better than all, he was, as the girl thought, a captain. The maiden was coy at first; but, when he swore that earth to him was but a desert without *her*—that all of future happiness to him was concentrated in her bewitching smile—that beauty such as hers was never meant to be profaned by the rude grasp of some coarse country boor—the usual effect followed—the poor girl believed that she was the loveliest on earth, and that it was in her power alone to save from misery, from premature death, a being who loved, nay, doated on her—whose sole remaining energies would be devoted to her service—and who would never, have a thought, a wish, which was not in unison with hers. Drunk with this flattery, she consented to fly with him—to leave a fond father's roof under cover of night, and put herself under the protection of a comparative stranger. Poor deceived girl, she never dreamed but that she took this step as the first towards becoming Mrs Mowbray. It never once entered into her thoughts that she was totally unfitted for the station to which she aspired, by the want of education, of *maniéré*, of everything but a fair skin and a handsome face. Like other girls who are esteemed pretty, she had been too often told that she was so; and this, in her, as in their estimation, compensated for all else. What is the use of "loveliness within" to her whose skin is of a blooming tincture? If maidens only knew how trifling is the value their most professed admirers really attach to beauty, they would be more attentive to the adornment of their minds, and only regard their pretty faces as a subsidiary, and not a principal recommendation to the attention of the harder sex.

Marion Leslie, the heroine of this episode, was the polestar to which the affections of most of the young men in the countryside pointed. She was kind to all; but for no particular one did she shew a preference. Among the foremost and most indefatigable of her wooers was Walter Kennedy, the smuggler's son; and his parents looked forward, with nearly as great joy as himself, to the day when his circumstances would enable him to offer his hand to Marion Leslie; for he could not think of asking her to share his fortunes when they were little better than her own.

After a week of wishing, the night arranged for the departure of Marion with Captain Mowbray at length arrived; and, as the village clock struck ten, she gently closed the door of her father's cottage behind her, and, with a small bundle containing her best "bib and tucker" in her hand, cautiously passed by the windows of the cottage, by the barn door, through "the slap," as the entrance to the place was denominated, and, finally, stood upon the highway. The moon was shining bright at that auspicious moment; but a minute after, and a mass of clouds hid it from her sight; again it peered from among the cloudy apertures, and again was hid from her view; and thus and thus it still went on, o'erspreading now the landscape with its misty light, and anon retiring behind the deep black drapery of heaven. An omen, she imagined, of her future destiny—shadows at first, bright joy afterwards, till, in the end, the clouds dispersed, and it sailed proudly and alone in the clear blue vault of heaven.

A few minutes had scarcely elapsed ere Captain Mowbray was at her side, and, pressing her to his heart, he cried—"Come, dearest Marion, at a short distance I have a carriage in waiting to convey us hence. A few short hours will but have passed ere we shall be safe in Glasgow; and, before the world is a week older, my pretty Marion will bloom forth the goddess of a fairy retreat in Devon; for there, love, I have a cottage mantled with honeysuckle and white roses;—a sweet sunshiny spot it is, which only wants the presence of her my heart holds dearest, to make it a perfect paradise."

"O Mowbray," simpered forth the blushing maiden, "ye speak sae bonny, an' look sae sweetly at me, that, if my heart had been made o' hard whinstane, ye wad hae fund the way to melt it. Can I be blamed for likin ye sae weel?"

"I trust not, my pretty one," said the gallant captain. "But, come, the carriage waits, and, besides, your absence may be discovered, and you pursued. Come!" and so saying, he carried rather than assisted Marion to walk towards the vehicle. The coachman stood beside the door with his whip in one hand, while the other was placed on the door handle. Mowbray praised the vigilance of the man, on seeing him in that ready posture, and desired him to open the door and let down the steps. With the first order he instantly complied; but, to his horror, ere there was time for the performance of the second, the captain was unexpectedly saluted by the contents of a water-pitcher, or some such utensil, which were dashed in his face by some unseen hand inside the carriage; and, ere

he could recover from the surprise and shock into which this event had thrown him, he found himself seized by the collar, and struggling in the hands of the coachman, who belaboured him most unmercifully with his whip. Thereafter, he was bundled neck and crop into the now empty carriage, and driven off with great rapidity, unconscious of and almost uncaring for the fate of Marion Leslie. After some time the carriage stopped, and he was lifted out; a bell was rung, a door was opened, and, quite exhausted, he was thrown into the lobby of the house of his friend, which he had left, with pleasant prospects and bright dreams, about an hour before. He was taken up by the domestics and carried to his room. The next morning he set out from his friend's for the alleged purpose of proceeding to England, urgent business being brought forward as an excuse for his sudden departure: yet, ere he left that part of the country, he tried to discover who had been the perpetrators of the outrage on his person; but, for a considerable time, without the least shadow of success. Marion Leslie, he ascertained, was ill and confined to bed—no doubt, with the fright she had received. He durst not go near her, lest he might encounter her father, who, perhaps, had been made acquainted with his attempt at the abduction of his daughter; and greatly he feared the old man's wrath, and the old man's curse.

One evening, however, having obtained information that Marion's father had gone to Girvan, and would not return all next day, he determined on seeing her the following morning. Accordingly, ere the sun was half-way on its course, Lieutenant Fairfax stood by the bedside of Marion Leslie. He gazed upon the village beauty in mute astonishment, for she was sadly altered; the roses of her cheek, which he had thought to possess so long as their freshness lasted, had been plucked by the more merciful hand of fever—the brightness of her hazel eyes was dimmed—no longer did a smile revel amid her handsome features—no longer was her step light and buoyant. But there she lay, seemingly more fitted for the cold embrace of death than of a lover—an object more for worms to batten on than for the gaze of him who sought her. She seemed quite unconscious of all that was passing around her.

The only other inhabitant of the cottage was exhibited in the person of an "auld wifie," who kept bustling about the apartment, engaged in the superintendence of cooking some potato soup; and, when her leisure from this avocation would permit, in attending on the sick girl.

"Marion," whispered Fairfax, when, after he had stood for some short time by her bedside, he found that she noticed him not—"Marion!"

She started at the sound of his voice, and, turning her "lacklustre eyes" upon him, uttered a piercing shriek.

"I kent he would come again, I kent it—did I no say he would?" she exclaimed. "He hadna the heart to desert puir Marion—Oh, no, he hadna the heart!"

There was a wildness—an unwonted fire in her eye as she uttered these words, which made even Lieutenant Fairfax shrink beneath her gaze, and turn away his eyes.

"Ay, ye may e'en be surprised," said the old woman, stopping in the act of stirring the soup; as, with the lid of the pot in one hand, and the "spurtle" in the other, she formed a fitting object for the captain's wandering eyes to rest upon. "The lassie's gane gyte, an' that's what'll be seen an' heard tell o' baith. Her faither 'll no believe *me* whan I say't, but I'm juist as sure as ye're stanin there, sir, that Marion Leslie's gaun clean red wud."

"I partially understand your meaning, my good woman," he said. "But tell me when and how did all this occur?—her illness?"—

"Ods sef us, sir, it's no an auld story, her illness. It was only last Friday week that the lassie didna get up at her usual time in the mornin; an' whan I cam in, I was sure that there was something wrang, she lookit sae shilpit like. An' it just turned out as I thocht it wud—the lassie was ill o' a brain fever."

"Poor thing! poor thing!" was the lieutenant's involuntary ejaculation.

"Weel, sir, as I was sayin, the lassie was ill o' a brain fever, an' she did naething but moan and graen, an' sab and sigh a' day lang, an' she aye cried about Walter Kennedy—that's an auld sweetheart o' hers, sir—and ane Mow—Mowbray I think she ca'd him, and aboot riding in her ain coach wi' sax horses; and then she said, that Walter and his faither had murdered Mowbray, an' I dinna ken a' what. Haith! I'm thinkin, sir, that the nicht afore she was taen ill, she had a dream, an awfu' dream o' some kind or ither."

"A dream, Bell!" exclaimed Marion Leslie, suddenly raising herself up on her elbow in the bed. "Na, na, lass! it wasna a dream. It was real. The bonny moon was up: Mowbray held me to his breast, and I was happy, happy. Bell! I'll never be sae happy again—no, never. They tore Mowbray from Marion, an' I thocht they had murdered him. But no, that canna be either, for he was here this mornin!"

As she said this, the lieutenant, fearful of agitating her anew with his presence, retired into the embrasure of the cottage window, and leant upon the sill.

"Wha was here?" was Bell's inquiry.

"Captain Mowbray, Bell! Him that I thocht they had murdered."

"Captain Mowbray! A captain in John Leslie's house. Wha wad hae thocht it. But are you really"——

Bell was in the act of addressing the latter part of this sentence to Fairfax, evidently with the purpose of ascertaining from his own lips the fact of his being a captain, when he motioned her to silence. But, as in thus addressing him, the dame's body had slightly veered round, perhaps unconsciously, towards the place where he stood, it immediately became palpably evident to Marion, that there was some one besides themselves in the apartment, and she followed with her eyes the motion of the dame. Again her glance rested upon Lieutenant Fairfax. The shock was too much for her, and she fell back in her bed, fainting. Bell flew to her relief, and began applying the usual restoratives.

"You, as well as Marion," said Lieutenant Fairfax hastily, "mentioned one Walter Kennedy as having been concerned with his father in a supposed murder. Who is he? Tell me quickly, for I must be gone ere that girl recovers. My presence, you see, is painful to her. Who is this Walter Kennedy?"

"He's the son of ane that taks the name o' being a fisherman," replied Bell, not stopping, however, in her employment; "but," added she, with a mysterious wag of the finger, "the folk about Carrick ken him to be a smuggler, and they say that the son is juist followin the trade o' his father."

Having obtained this scanty information, Fairfax, after placing a purse, containing some guineas, in the dame's hand, to be applied to the wants of Marion on her recovery, hurried from the cottage. That evening he resumed the command of his vessel, the *Shark*, in the preventive service, which was stationed in the Irish Channel.

Some short time after the lieutenant's re-appearance on board the *Shark*, many of the crew remarked that he and Dawson, the mate, were much oftener in each other's company than was thought absolutely necessary for the giving and receiving instructions with regard to the government of the vessel; and, on one occasion, when Dawson volunteered to keep the midwatch alone, the Lieutenant did not object to it, but seemed rather pleased with the arrangement! All this appeared very odd to the more observant

among the crew, who, no doubt like other subordinates, felt the demon of envy roused within them at the lieutenant's partiality for one whom they considered little better than themselves.

On that night that Dawson held the watch alone, one who lay awake in his hammock, thought he heard the plash of oars, and presently felt something strike against the vessel's side, as if a boat had been brought to. He started up, and ran upon deck—not a soul was there. He then gave a glance over the starboard quarter, and there found his expectations realized, for in the dim light he descried a boat containing two people, one of whom was making it fast to the vessel. Creeping stealthily along the deck, he secreted himself behind the windlass, and shortly afterwards had the satisfaction of beholding the mate come on board, while another person, who, he felt assured, was Lieutenant Fairfax, ascended from the cabin.

"Have you accomplished it?" asked the Lieutenant in a whisper.

"I have!" was the reply. "She is in the boat alongside."

The lieutenant then hurried forward, followed by Dawson, and both bending over the side, assisted on board a figure, which Hunter, (he who lay ensconced behind the windlass,) believed to be a woman, completely enveloped in a boat cloak. At the moment of this person's coming on deck, Hunter merely *suspected* it to be one of the female sex, but this suspicion rose to an absolute certainty, when he saw the lieutenant press her in his arms, and imprint a considerable number of kisses on her lips, which seemed to be received with the utmost fervency; and when he heard a gentle voice, that could not be mistaken for a man's, exclaim—"Dear Mowbray, I'm your's for ever!"

What the lieutenant said in answer to this, Hunter could not hear distinctly, for the lieutenant spoke in a low tone of voice. Stray words and bits of sentences, however, fell occasionally upon his ear, and from them he could gather sufficient to inform him that the lieutenant was congratulating her on her recovery from a severe illness, and expressing his approbation of her "heroic conduct," as he was pleased to term it, in eluding the vigilance of her friends, and daring the perils of the ocean to fly to the arms of her adoring lover.

The lieutenant and the lady then left the deck, following Dawson, who had vanished down the companion ladder a few minutes previous.

Hunter lay, in a state of extreme nervous excitement, in the same spot on which his curiosity had first placed him, afraid to return to his hammock lest he might chance to stumble on the mate, who, he was certain, would return instantly to the deck to resume his watch, as his time was well nigh done, and trembling with the conflicting fear that the mate, now that he was below at any rate, might take it into his head to look into the berth and discover his absence. These fears were soon put an end to by the speedy re-appearance of the mate on deck.

How to return to his hammock before the watch was changed, was the next thought of Hunter. He felt, as an Irishman would say, "most congrumptiously bothered," for he was one of those who had to keep the watch that followed. If detected skulking, and prying into matters with which he had no concern, he well knew that Fairfax would shew him no mercy. The night was, luckily for him, dark enough for any one to lie concealed behind a bulkhead without much risk of discovery from a person who did not know he was there concealed; but the moment he left that place of concealment, and stood upon the open deck, Hunter was well aware that the chances were greatly against him. He would inevitably be seen by the mate, who kept pacing backwards and forwards with the most untiring perseverance. After due deliberation, for a very small space of time, Hunter fell upon a plan to elude the mate's vigilance. He waited till the mate passed the windlass and turned again, and following him, with a noiseless foot as closely as it was possible for him to do, he gained the companion ladder unseen, and immediately afterwards he was swinging in his hammock, and making a snoring noise as loud as the best of them.

The next day did not pass over Hunter's head without his comrades being informed of all he had been witness to on the preceding night, and the information that there was a lady concealed in the lieutenant's cabin was speedily dispersed throughout the ship. The fact in itself was nothing extraordinary to the crew; but their curiosity was excited when they could not ascertain who the lady was, far less obtain a sight of her. No one had access to the Lieutenant's room except Dawson the mate, and a little black boy who swept it regularly every morning. The former, of course, would give them no enlightenment on the subject, and the latter never saw anything to indicate the presence of a lady on board. Indeed, as time wore on, and the impression began to die away from the minds of the crew, so did their belief regarding the veracity of Hunter, until at length they treated his story as the creation of an idle brain; and they would have entirely forgotten the circumstance, or remembered it only as a jeer against Hunter, had not one morning, at an early hour, the presence of the mate on board, and his minute inquiries whether any one had seen a boat put off from the vessel during the night, forcibly recalled it to their recollection. Whom could this boat contain, if not one of the crew? They were all aboard; and the lieutenant, who had returned from the shore at a late hour, had brought no one with him. But that some one had gone from the vessel was evident, not only from the fact of Dawson's inquiry, but that the boat in which the lieutenant had returned was missing, the rope which had fastened it to the vessel being, on examination, found to have been cut. It was a rule, which the lieutenant himself had made, that when any of the ship's boats arrived from the shore during the night, when there was not a sufficiency of hands to haul them to their place at the stern, they might lie alongside till the morning; and bitterly did he now lament that he had ever made such a rule.

The reader will possibly have already surmised, that the mysterious lady in the boat-cloak, whom Hunter had seen come on board, was no other than Marion Leslie. Allured by the repeated professions of Lieutenant Fairfax, both personally and through the agency of Dawson, she had left her father's house a second time to fly to his arms. Little did she imagine that he meant otherwise than to marry her; but in this she found herself, when too late, most egregiously deceived; and it was after a colloquy with him on this subject that she had left the vessel.

Lieutenant Fairfax had received an invitation to dinner from a friend who lived a short distance up the country, and he was dressing for the occasion and otherwise preparing to go ashore, when Marion, who, seated in a corner of his cabin, had been regarding him for some time with a scrutinizing air, suddenly rose, and laying her hand gently on his arm, and turning her eyes full upon his face, said—

"You'll surely never leave poor Marion alone; will ye, Mowbray? Ye ken how sad—how very sad I am when you're away frae me."

"Tuts, you silly girl!" responded Fairfax, somewhat nettled at being disturbed in his avocation, as he was fearful of being behind his time. "You would not wish me, surely, to disappoint my friend? I *must* go. If I had thought of it, or if you had told me yesterday how inconvenient it was for you to be left here alone, I would have sent an apology—'tis too late now."

"Ay, ay," observed Marion, turning from him, "it's the way wi' a' your sex. After ye hae taen the flower frae the stem, and find it withering instead o' blooming, as ye

thocht it would, ye throw't away just like a worthless weed. But its nae matter—Mowbray, ye never loved me!"

"Nonsense, girl, nonsense! I never loved one of your sex so fondly, so passionately as I have done you! You wrong me—indeed you do."

"Then if ye love me sae fondly as ye say, what hinders ye, Captain Mowbray, frae making me your wife?"

"Umph!" said the lieutenant to himself, pretending to adjust his neckcloth before the glass; then, with a sprightly air to her, he continued—"Come, come, don't fret, my pretty Marion. We'll talk of this when I return. Good-by, Marion. I will assuredly be late if I don't go instantly."

He would have kissed her, but she pushed him rudely away.

"Yes!" she exclaimed, "you fear to give an answer to my question; but I see it a'—you never meant to fulfil those vows you gave me. But sooner than live wi' ye as I hae lived, I'd plunge amid the waves, and in their roar hush my despairing sighs."

As she said this, she opened the cabin window, perhaps with the intention of putting her threat into execution. Fairfax clutched her garments, drew her back, and fastened the window more firmly than it was before. Marion sunk upon the sofa from which she had just risen, and burst into a flood of tears. After watching her for a minute or two in silence, Fairfax, seeing no indications, on her part, to hold farther converse with him for the present, and time being inexorable, left the cabin, and, shortly afterwards, the ship itself.

On the return of Lieutenant Fairfax, which was considerably past midnight, he stayed but for a few moments on deck to speak with the mate, and, on entering his cabin, was surprised, instead of finding Marion in bed, to see one of the windows open, and the place vacant—Marion Leslie was gone. He called to the mate, and, firmly believing that Marion had drowned herself, began cursing himself and all the world. Dawson, however, who was not quite so much excited on the occasion, made a strict search throughout the vessel, but without making any further discovery than that the boat in which the lieutenant had returned was also gone. He had little doubt that Marion had gone ashore in it, as the first mean of escape which had presented itself to her; and, if such was really the case, she could not yet be very far on her way. After questioning all on board as to whether they had seen the boat put off, by Fairfax's orders he took another boat himself, and went off in pursuit of the fair fugitive. But, with all his speed, he was unable to overtake her—she had gained the shore ere he had left the ship, and the empty boat in which she had sailed was floating on the receding tide a short distance out. After a two hours' search, Dawson was compelled to return as he had gone—he could find no traces of her.

From that hour, Lieutenant Fairfax became a sullen and a discontented man—gloomy in mind, and fearful in purpose. That the Kennedies had had some hand in Marion's flight, was, in his estimation, evident; and he resolved to return their *kindness* with interest, on the very first opportunity that should present itself.

This conjecture of the lieutenant, which he had ingeniously conjured up into a belief, was by no means correct—neither Walter Kennedy nor his father knew anything of the abduction of Marion, or of her subsequent flight from the arms of her abducer. Little more than a fortnight had elapsed, from the hour in which Marion had, for the second time, bade adieu to the humble dwelling of her father, and, in company with Dawson, repaired to the vessel of him, the truth of whose vows she confidently believed and trusted in. During all that time, Walter had been absent, with his father, on a smuggling expedition to the Isle of Man, where he had been careful to select several gewgaws of foreign workmanship and manufacture, which, on his return home, he intended to present to Marion Leslie, as tokens of his increasing love. Poor fellow, he little dreamt that he and his love were alike despised.

It was during the night that the smugglers returned; and, under cover of the darkness, they fairly eluded the vigilance of Fairfax, notwithstanding his determined purpose in keeping a constant watch for them. Unscathed they reached the shore.

Just as Walter was stepping from the boat, he felt that the collar of his jacket was grasped by a rude hand. Instantly dashing it aside, he leapt on shore; and, with uplifted arm, prepared to fell to the earth the perpetrator of this sudden outrage. Amazement!—he looked on the father of Marion Leslie.

"Ay, ye may weel start at seeing me, ye villain that ye are!" cried John Leslie, confronting him. "What hae ye made o' Marion?"

"O' Marion!" reiterated Walter.

"Yes! Ye needna repeat my words. Ye ken best whar she is."

"As I hope for mercy," said Walter, "I kenna oucht about her."

"Can I believe ye, Walter? She disappeared frae my house about the time that ye left Carrick shore; an I never doubed but that you kent whar she was."

"An' could ye really think, John Leslie, that I would hae taen your dochter frae aneath your roof in ony way dishonourable. No, sir; had she gaen wi' *me*, it would hae been only as my wedded wife. I thoucht ye kent me better!"

"Then," cried John Leslie, in agony, as if the thought had not before crossed his mind, "ye would say that it is to follow evil Marion has left me. Na, na! it can hardly be. I couldna expect that o' Marion—she that was my darling bairn—she that I looked forward to as being the comfort o' my auld age. A' but her gaed frae me: death took my twa sons, and my ither dochter, an' she was a' that was left to me; but, since she's gaen too, auld John Leslie has naething mair to care for in this warld. Death may come noo whene'er it pleases him, wi' the breath o' the Martinmas wind."

The old man would have sunk down on the ground from mere exhaustion, had not Walter Kennedy supported him in his arms, and, gently leading him to his father's hut, tried, by every means in his power, to minister to the mind diseased. The only thing, however, which shed a gloom of joy into the old man's withered heart, was Walter's promise that he would set out in search of Marion so soon as the day dawn would permit him, and that he would avenge her wrongs the instant that he discovered the perpetrator of them.

Humble as the situation of John Leslie was, he had striven by every means to make Marion's life easy and comfortable, for he loved her with a love which few fathers in his station of life ever exhibit towards their offspring. She, however, could not return his affection; for, from her earliest years, she had been so courted and flattered by "the lads of the village," that her self-love had overcome her philanthropy. By small and small degrees, she had frittered away any affection she had ever possessed, bestowing a part on this lover, and a part on that, until, at length, she had none left to anybody. What she had already bestowed, she had not the power of recalling, even although all those who held it had proved unfaithful to her, except Walter Kennedy; and had she been able to concentrate upon him the whole of that love which it had once been in her power to bestow, it would have well for her future happiness. The love she thought she entertained for Captain Mowbray, was merely a desire of having ambitious hopes

gratified—of becoming the wife of one who occupied a station so much superior to her own.

On leaving the vessel, Marion had made all speed towards the shore, which she was fortunate enough to reach ere it was in the power of Dawson to overtake her. Fearing pursuit, she secreted herself behind a large mass of rock which had been detached and fallen, perhaps some centuries before, from the brow of the cliff overhead. As she thus lay in concealment, she saw Dawson come ashore, and, by skilful manœuvring, she contrived to slip from behind the rock a moment ere he searched there for her. When he had left the beach, she made all possible haste to the nearest town, where she possessed herself of a small phial full of laudanum, for the not uncommon design of putting a period to her life, not in consequence of her own errors. but because she had been fool enough to allow herself to be deceived. A sacrifice of life at the shrine of wounded vanity.

Yet ere she took the poison, she determined to revisit her once happy home, to look on its walls for the last time, perhaps to see her father, and obtain his forgiveness. With this laudable resolve, she set forward, and, in a short time, she stood before the cottage of John Leslie. After a moment's pause, she undid the latch and entered. A large sheep-dog, which had been for years a faithful servant of the family, was the only inmate. He rose up with alacrity from the hearth on which he had been reposing, and, leaping upon Marion, began barking, licking her hands, and giving other demonstrations of joy at her return. Suddenly, however, his merriment underwent a total change—he uttered a low growl, drooped his ears, and, with his tail curled inwards, cowered down and crept beneath the kitchen dresser.

Even the very dog despises me, thought Marion. Then what may I expect will be my receptions frae my faither? Better to dee at ance than meet his frown. As these bodings rose in her mind, she held the fatal draught to her lips and drained it off. A drowsiness fell upon her, and she threw herself upon the bed.

Walter Kennedy, who had been scouring the country round in all directions since daybreak, now accompanied John Leslie home. What was his astonishment, on entering the cottage, to see the form of Marion on the bed. He rushed forward and called her by name. She answered not, for a deep sleep was on her. With a distracted air he looked upon her face. A slight smile overspread her features, and her breathing assured him that she lived—a thing which at first he had doubted. It was not till after nearly an hour that he, by the help of her father, succeeded in rousing her; and when, at length, she spoke, it was in a most wild and almost incoherent manner. Walter asked her where she had been so long. She replied by a terrific and unearthly laugh—the gibber of a lunatic.

"Mowbray!" she cried, after a pause, while Walter held her lest she should sink to the ground. "They sae you're gaun to leave me—ha! ha! ha!" Here the same laugh resounded through the cottage, as she clutched Walter to her breast. Then throwing him off, she broke into—

"O go, O go now, my bower wife,
O go now hastilie,
O go now to sweet Willie's bower,
And bid him come speak to me."

At once, Walter saw the state in which Marion was, and, entrusting her to her father's care, hastily mixed an emetic. This he administered; and, in the afternoon, when he left the cottage, he had the satisfaction of seeing her in a fair way of recovery.

A day or two afterwards, he was again on his way to the Isle of Man.

The gray streaks of morning were beginning to appear in the eastern sky yet still stood Helen Kennedy on the shore, eagerly watching for the boat's return. The storm was much abated. Now, only the morning breeze played over the surface of the waters, scarcely stirring her garments. She was clad in a hooped petticoat—for all this happened upwards of sixty years ago—surmounted by an old sailor's jacket. Her cap, of the finest French cambric, fitted close to her head, confining her, what had once been, raven locks, but which were now intermingled with a not very scanty supply of gray. Over this she had tied a handkerchief, which passed adown her cheeks, and terminated in a graceful knot underneath her chin. This was to protect her head from the night air. She bore the features of one who, in her younger days, had been considered beautiful; but time, and care, and sorrow, had all done their best to "sweep the lines where beauty lingered;" yet, even their united efforts had been unable to finish entirely the work they had so begun—for there yet remained some traces of her former loveliness. And, standing as she was on the lone sea-shore, attired in such habiliments as then were her's, just at the time when "day was at its breaking," she would have formed not an unfitting subject for a painter on which to exert his utmost skill. The smuggler's cottage in the background and the picturesque ruins of Dunmore Castle, by whose side it stood, would have furnished him with ample materials wherewith to fill up the scene.

Darkness was fast hastening away, scared by the bright eye of Aurora; and, in that imperfect light, the keen glances of Helen could detect the boat, which she had been so anxiously expecting, make its appearance from behind the Craig of Ailsa. She instantly hastened into the cottage; and, rousing her youngest boy from his slumbers, dispatched him to give intelligence to those in the neighbourhood who were in the habit of trading with Martin Kennedy.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Fairfax—who had been apprised of Martin's second trip to the Isles of Man and Arran, for the purpose of importing French brandy, laces, and the other etceteras of luxury to be obtained there at a very trifling cost, and of landing them in Britain without defraying the accustomed dues—was on the outlook for his return, and had stationed his vessel between Ailsa Craig and the shore. No sooner, therefore, did he descry the boat making its way from behind the Craig, than he gave chase. But Martin, unprepared as he was for this rencontre, was too quick for him. As Fairfax's vessel advanced, he retreated; and, after two or three turns round the Craig, he succeeded in mystifying the lieutenant, and fairly dodging him. When he had manœuvred the *Shark* so far as to get it round on the other side of the Craig—by which means the way between it and the shore was clear for him—he, with the assistance of his son, Walter, spread every sail; and the little bark darted forward, "swift as an arrow from an archer's bow," and gained the shore just as the *Shark* made its reappearance from behind the Craig. By the assistance of the assembled neighbours, the cargo was soon landed from the smuggler's boat—a plank of which Martin presently drove in with a boathook, and down it sank beneath the waters of the little creek, leaving no trace behind.

The cottage of Martin Kennedy had, in ancient days, been built by some one of his forefathers, who, following the same employment as his descendant, had taken peculiar care that it should be able to afford him shelter in the hour of peril. The back wall had been ingeniously piled against a perpendicular part of the rock, which joins that on which stands the ruined Castle of Dunmore. Behind this wall, there extended, far into the rock, a large and commodious cavern; and here it was that Martin was in the habit of placing the various goods he, from time to time, acquired—the fruits of his many moonlight trips across the Irish Channel. The mode of entrance to this

cavern was by the fireplace—the grate which stood therein being always fixed in with soft clay, could be removed at a moment's warning, and as quickly returned to its place again. No doubt, this cave had, in its time, been the hidingplace of many a one who feared an encounter with the myrmidons of justice.

There was another cave a short distance from the cottage, and under the very rock on which Dunmore Castle stood. It bore the appellation of the Smugglers' Cave, from the circumstance of its having been the temporary abode of some French practitioners in that ancient craft, during the time of the Rebellion of 1715. The more easily to elude the vigilance of the authorities, they had dug a deep cavity in the floor of the cave, about ten yards distant from the entrance; and into this cavity they were wont to let down the casks containing the fruits of their spoil, until they entirely filled it. Gravel and loose sand were then called into requisition; and the floor, by such means, being made quite even, all the custom-house officers and preventive men in the country were completely set at defiance—they were quite unable to discover this "secret lurking-place." The cave was now fallen into disuse; for Martin Kennedy, the only legitimate successor resident in its immediate vicinity, was well enough provided with the capacious premises adjoining his own mansion of Castleweary; and none, almost, of the country people, would dare to venture within the entrance of it. Some indistinct idea of its being haunted was for ever in their morbid imaginations. The few, however, who *had* gone in, for reasons best known to themselves, never went back again. This, in the case of one or two, was easily accounted for: by reason of their unacquaintance with the geography of the place, they were very nearly tumbling head over heels into the cavity—in which, if they could credit their ears, the sound of rushing water assured them that a streamlet occupied the place which, upwards of fifty years before, had been tenanted by French brandy and real Hollands.

Martin Kennedy—having sunk his boat, to elude discovery as much as possible—repaired, with several of his neighbours, to his own cottage, where, having divested himself of his sea attire, and donned, in its stead, a blue, cutaway coat, lined with red, he betook himself, with the assistance of all present, to the stowing away of the remaining part of his cargo—those of his neighbours who had come to the beach on horseback having relieved him of a considerable quantity of his smaller casks; they being wont to sling a couple or so each upon their horses' backs, and scamper home with them—the price, in many instances, to be accounted for afterwards, or never at all at farthest.

"Now, father," urged Walter, when their arrangements had been nearly completed, "you'll better hide, along with the casks, in the cave there; for, if thae fellows come ashore, and I think they will, it'll be as much as your life's worth to be seen here, after jinking them this morning. As for me, they'll no gie a doit; I'm no wha they seek."

Had Walter known that Lieutenant Fairfax, the commander of the vessel from which he and his father had that morning made so narrow an escape, was one and the same with Captain Mowbray, to whom he had once served out an allowance of cold water, while his father applied his whip to the gallant Captain's shoulders, he would not have said so. In the wish that Martin should conceal himself, Walter was seconded by his mother, and many of those present. With considerable reluctance, Martin, after taking a hearty breakfast, complied; and, over an anker-cask of prime brandy, Walter and the neighbours sat down, with the intention of passing an hour or two.

"Come awa, Davie!" cried the mistress of the house and her son, in one breath, on observing the entrance of David M'Hargo, jobbing-wright at Kyle, and some second cousin of Martin's—"Come awa, Davie; ye're just in time."

"Haith! I ken that. I'm just in time to tell ye that that deevil's limb, Fairfax, is steering direc for this; and, unless ye tak care, Watty, ye'll get yer croon crackit, I'm thinkin."

"Hoot, man, never mind Lieutenant Fairfax. As the song says, Davy—

"We'll fight while we can! when we can't, boys, we'll run;"

Sae never ye fash yer thoom aboot it, but just sit down and gie us yer cracks."

"Ay, Davy, sit down, sit down!" was chorussed forth *singulatim* by the assembled company; and Davy, in compliance with the general request, sat down accordingly; and, as soon thereafter as might be, he was deep in the contents of a glass of the brandy.

"Weel, Davie, and hoo hae ye been a' this time?" inquired the smuggler's wife; "and what job are ye working at noo?"

"Deed I'm no doein meikle ye noo. I was working a' last week and twa weeks afore that at the House o' Cassilis."

"The House o' Cassilis!" was the united exclamation uttered with fear—for that house stood in no very good odour with the peasantry, none of whom dared pass it after night-fall.

"An' what war ye doin there?" was the bold query of one, when the surprise began to subside a little.

"Ou, I was just helpin Jock Hannah to lay some new floorin, for the auld stuff was rather the war for the wear. But," added he, in a low tone, and drawing his chair further in the circle—for the greater part of the company were seated round the fire—"I never gat such a fricht as I did in that auld House o' Cassilis. In lifting the planks o' the floor in ane o' the rooms, Jock an' I fand that they extended into the next room, through below the wash-board, just richt below the wa'. Weel, we be't to hae the floorin, lifted; an' we askit the housekeeper for the key of the next room.

"'Whatna key?' quoth she, 'there's nae next room at that end o' the hoose.' But Jock and me warna to be put aff that way, so we searched an' searched for nearly twa hours, but deevil a door could we find."

"Astonishing!" ironically exclaimed Tam Swipes, one of the farm-servants from an adjoining estate, who sat at the cheek of the chimney.

"A room withoot a door!" cried anither: "Na, na, Davie, that cock 'll no fecht!"

"Bide a bit!—bide a bit!" returned Davie, nowise disconcerted or put out of humour by these uncivil remarks. "As I was saying, deevil a door could we find. I was sure that there was a room on the ither side o' the wa' though, for a' that, an', wi' Jock's assistance, I took doon the washboard, an' made a hole through the wa' big eneuch to let a man in. Well, through this hole I gaed wi' a licht in my haun; an' sure eneuch I fand mysel in a room. There was neither door nor window till't; an' what was in't, think ye?"

"Umph!—maybe a trunk fu' o' gowd!" said Tam Swipes, who was reckoned rather a small wit in his way.

"Nae such thing, I assure ye," continued Davie. "There was a deal table in the middle o' the floor, wormeaten, and fa'in into dust; on it there was a naked sword, ingrained wi' bluid an' roost; an' last o' a', there was—that terrified me maist—a skeleton lying on the grund."*

"Lord preserve us!" ejaculated the smuggler's wife. "Is that a fac?"

"It's as fac's death," said Davie.

* This apartment is still extant in the House of Cassilis, and ever since this event took place, it has gone by the appellation of the "Ghost's Room."

"An' does naebody ken wha the skeleton has been?" asked Walter.

"No exactly—some think it has been ane o' the victims o' the Earl, that fought side by side wi' bluidy Clavers against the Covenanters. Oh, he was a cruel man, an' a rank Papist to boot.'

"Ay, that was he," observed Helen Kennedy. "I mind o' once hearing my faither tell a story aboot that Earl o' Cassilis. He was gaun alang through ane o' his fields ae Sabbath mornin; an', by chance, he lichtit upon a herd that was sittin on the face o' a brae reading his Bible. The Earl couldna bear to see this, sae he drew his sword and ran the puir herd through the body. In the e'enin he happened to come back that way, whan, to his surprise, the herd was still leevin, lyin weltering in his bluid, an' cryin out maist piteously, puir fallow!

"'Are ye aye bletherin there yet?" wrathfully cried the Earl. The herd at this turned owre on his side, an wi' his deein een fixed on the Earl, said—

"'Before ye dee, proud Earl o' Cassilis, ye'll no hae ony tongue to blether wi'." An' what was very strange, the Earl's tongue tumbled out o' his head just afore he dee't."

"Hoot!" interposed Tam Swipes, who knew a great deal about the diseases of cattle, and a very little about the diseases of men, "that could hae been occasioned by cancer in the tongue."

"Tam Swipes! Tam Swipes!" said the dame, "I wonder to hear ye. It was nae cancer, but a judgment."

"Weel, weel, never mind, mother," said Walter; "cancer or no cancer, it's nae very great matter. See here's Bobby Bluemug waitin to gie us a sang, as we hae mair need to hae our spirits raised than sunk by your waesome an' auld warld stories." As he uttered this, he pointed to a dismal looking individual in the corner, whose headpiece was adorned with a scratch wig, and whose attention had been so entirely fixed by the stories he had been listening to, that he had not spoken a word, fearing to break the spell.

"I'm no great singer, Guid kens," modestly insinuated Bobby; whether he thought so was another thing. "I'm nae great singer, but since ye force me till't, I maun juist do my best;" and, with an introductory "hem" or two, he launched forth into the following ditty, the air of which was neither one thing nor t'other, but a sort of mysterious concatenation of "sound and fury, signifying nothing:"—

When the broom was in its bloom, in the pleasant summer time,
An' the birds upon every tree,
A' joyfully thrang, singing ilk ane its sang,
'Twas then ye'd see Jeanie an' me.
Broom, broom on the hill;
The bonny, bonny broom for me.

An frae the bonny een o' my bonny Jean,
There eam sparks o' fire whan she spake;
But noo thae days are gane, I maun wander my lane,
Wi' a heart that is juist like to break.
Yet broom, broom on the hill;
The bonny, bonny broom for me.

Oh, wha wad hae thocht that Jeanie could be bocht,
On anither as sweetly would smile;
But I'll trust nae mair ava, it's the way wi' them a';
In women there's naething but guile.
Broom, broom on the hill;
The bonny, bonny broom for me.

The applause that followed these indifferent verses, was great—very great indeed. It lasted for the space of nearly three minutes and three quarters; and there is every reason to believe that it would have continued much longer, had not a stop been put to their merriment by the bursting open of the cottage door, and the entrance of Lieutenant Fairfax, followed by a portion of the preventive service men from the *Shark*.

"What, ho!" he cried: "is Martin Kennedy at home? But, perhaps, that question is a superfluous one, as we *know* he is here. We saw him enter." Ere one present could reply, he continued, addressing his men:—"Some of you search the cottage; let not a cranny or niche remained unexplored; and bring to me, alive or dead, this dog—this smuggler who has so long defied us."

"Wretch!" muttered Walter—scarcely loud enough to be heard, however.

"Pray, my good woman," said the lieutenant, blandly, to Helen Kennedy, (who, on his entrance, had squatted down upon the keg of brandy, on the contents of which the company had for the last half hour been regaling, so that the ample skirt of her hooped petticoat completely hid it from view)—"Pray, my good woman, is Martin—your husband I presume—often absent from you?"

"Find that out by your lair," was the dame's answer.

"Umph!" ejaculated the lieutenant, somewhat disconcerted. Then continuing—(for he had his own suspicions regarding the brandy, on which she had deposited herself)—"You take matters cooly, dame; why do you sit when all else are standing?"

"That's nae business o' yours, I'm thinking. But since ye're sae anxious to ken, I'll tell ye: I'm tired!"

"Indeed! I am afraid, however, that your seat is rather a strange one. May I ask you of what materials it is composed?" At the same time, he began poking at her petticoat with his sword, to ascertain whether his conjecture was a true one.

"Haud awa, haud awa, wi' ye. Do you mean to affront me, sir, afore a' the folk."

"You had better be quiet, Lieutenant," said Walter, confronting Fairfax, "or we'll maybe mak ye."

"Insolent!—Here, Allan! Jeffries!" and, at his command, the crew defiled from an inner chamber, where their search for Martin had, of course, been fruitless. When Fairfax was apprised of this, his rage doubled itself upon Walter. "Allan!" he cried, "bind this fellow—he is as culpable as the father that begot him—bind him and bear him to the boat."

"A word or twa to that, my sma' freen," said Walter, taking down a cutlass from the wall, and exhorting those of the neighbours who still remained—some three in number, the rest having vanished at the first appearance of hostility—to do the like; he threw himself into a posture of defence, and calmly awaited the attack, determined to sell his life as dearly as possible.

"Upon him!—seize the rebel!" shouted Fairfax. His men endeavoured to obey his orders; but, for a while, they were fairly foiled by Walter and his associates, who had interposed a table between themselves and the advancing party. The combat was stoutly maintained on both sides, the besieged obtaining a reinforcement in the person of Walter's mother, who rushed upon the assailant's rear, and did great execution upon their sconces and other parts of their bodies by means of a stout kitchen poker, which she held in her hand, and brandished with inconceivable dexterity. At length, however—the table being broken—Walter's party were completely overpowered. Helen was thrust into the inner chamber, and the door locked upon her. The rest of the party were about to be led off to the vessel to supply the place of two men, who lay weltering in their blood upon the floor of the cottage, the only victims of the fierce encounter, when the cottage window was suddenly pushed back upon its hinges from without, and a human face peered through the aperture.

"Hold!" cried the voice of the mysterious visitant. "Touch not a hair of Walter Kennedy's head! Beware, *Captain* Mowbray, or you shall feel that vengeance the more quickly, which you *must* some day feel at my hand." All present now observed that the speaker was a female, clad in white. "Three months ago," she continued, "nane

would hae daured to taint the name o' Marion Leslie; but noo, the merest beggar's dog can brag a better character than she. Villain! my vengeance—the vengeance of Marion Leslie—the scorned minion, the cast off plaything of you, Captain Mowbray—is sure to fa' on your devoted head." It was Marion Leslie who spoke; her wrongs made her poetical; and at that moment she spoke words which she knew not she had at her command. It was the language of passion.

Lieutenant Fairfax was awe-struck.

"Dawson!" he said to his mate, so soon as the agonized state of his feelings would permit—"Dawson! secure that maniac!" And Dawson prepared to obey his commander's orders; but on gaining the outside of the cottage, he found that Marion Leslie had taken flight; and he beheld her just entering the "Smuggler's Cave," beneath Dunmore Castle, for protection. Dawson followed in her wake, and, on entering the cave, was successful enough to descry the white garments of Marion at the farther end. He rushed forward, and caught her by the arm.

"Come away, my lass!" said he. "You'll be well treated, depend on it. Six water grog, and a mouldy biscuit every day for you. I'm blessed if you won't get as plump as a partridge on rich delicacies as these. So saying, he gave his trowsers a hitch with his disengaged hand, and turned the quid in his mouth, after the most approved fashion.

"I will not go with you!" exclaimed the once gentle Marion. "Let go your hold—monster, let go!" But Dawson held her the firmer, and endeavoured to drag her forward.

"Hoy, Dawson,!" cried the voice of Lieutenant Fairfax, from the mouth of the cave—he having returned to aid Dawson in the capture of Marion, after seeing Walter Kennedy, and the three companions of that indomitable youth, safely stowed in the boat, and making for the cutter in the offing. "Dawson, bring the girl along!"

Dawson heard him not, for Marion Leslie had locked her arms firmly about his neck, and succeeded in dragging the hardy sailor to the mouth of the chasm—a splash as of some heavy body having fallen among water—a yell that rent the air, and which the echoes of the cavern gave back again—were all the sounds that met the ear of Fairfax. A minute longer and all was still, and he left the cave, into which he was afraid to enter, fully assured Dawson at least was no more; and as for Marion, it was no great matter. If she had escaped this time, he might chance to find her again. He therefore turned along the beach, and embarked for his vessel in the returned boat.

All these proceedings had passed so quickly, that Martin Kennedy knew nothing of them; so completely had he been occupied in his vault in arranging the various contents of it, that even the clash of arms had not been heard by him. How great was his astonishment, therefore, on releasing himself from his confinement, at a late hour in the day, to find his cottage deserted, the furniture broken, and all wearing the aspect of a recent skirmish. His first act was to open the door of the inner apartment; and, Helen being released, informed him of all that had befallen Walter and his companions. The old man knelt down, and, offering up a prayer for their speedy deliverance, vowed that he should spare no pains to compass it.

* * * * * *

A few months passed heavily away, and Walter Kennedy was still on board the cutter.

One day, about noon, a small boat was descried by the pilot, making its way, with all expedition, to the shore. Being suspected of containing contraband wares, Lieutenant Fairfax ordered instant chase to be given. One figure was alone discernible on board—that of an old man.

"Good heavens!" unconsciously exclaimed Walter on nearing it—"It is my father!"

"Walter Kennedy!" said Fairfax, who had overheard him—"I command you to fire upon that boat!"

"Never, ruffian!" cried Walter.

"Secure him, lads! The dog has disobeyed my orders."

And Walter Kennedy was instantly seized and put in irons. A court-martial was called, the sentence of which was, that Walter should receive a hundred lashes for disobedience, and thereafter be transferred to the *Boreas*, a man-of-war ship then about to sail for active service.

It was a calm and beautiful autumn evening that preceding to the day on which this sentence was to be carried into execution. With the exception of the necessary complement of men required on board, which was centred in one "for this occasion only," the crew had obtained leave to go ashore. Lieutenant Fairfax was in his cabin, reclining listlessly, between waking and sleeping, upon a sofa—Walter Kennedy lay manacled in the hold. Once Fairfax thought that some one stirred in the room; but being unwilling to shift his position but for a moment, he contented himself with setting it to the account of imagination. He slept, and in his sleep he thought that Walter Kennedy stood over his couch in a menacing posture. He felt the pressure of his fingers upon his neck, as if placed there for the purpose of strangulation. He started and awoke. And he was now convinced that some one had that instant passed from his cabin, for the door was pulled to from without.

"The ship is on fire, and the prisoner has escaped!" cried a voice.

"Blood and wounds!" exclaimed Fairfax, rushing from his cabin and dashing the man, who had given the alarm, to the ground. The smoke was issuing from the port-holes, and it was but too evident that the vessel was on fire. A small boat, containing Walter Kennedy and his father, was making its way from the burning cutter with all speed. With his own hand Lieutenant Fairfax rang the alarm-bell, and threw out other signals of distress. The fire was gaining fast. At length he succeeded in attracting the attention of many on shore, and boats were put off to his assistance. They might as well have spared themselves the pains; for, ere they were half a mile from shore, the cutter lay a shapeless wreck upon the waters. The fire had reached the powder magazine, and Fairfax perished in the explosion that followed.

All this had been effected through the instrumetality of Kennedy. He knew of the crew being ashore, and he determined to profit by it. With caution he approached the *Shark*, and, having attached his boat thereto, gained admission by one of the stern windows. His first act was to proceed to the hold and liberate his son, who followed his father in silence to the boat—not, however, without first throwing a lighted brand among a quantity of flax, which had been placed at the farther end of the hold for some purpose or other. The result has been already ascertained.

In the Smuggler's Cave, there were afterwards found two skeleton forms locked in each other's firm embrace. The fate of Marion Leslie, and the mate Dawson was recalled to the minds of the peasantry when this fact was communicated to them; and the bones were carefully gathered up and quietly entombed in graves dug in the sea-beach



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE FACTOR.

Will our readers renounce for a little their love of modern rhetoric, and take, upon the sanction of truth, a plain tale of humble life?

Robert Landel was tacksman of the farm of Riddleglen, which, at the end of the last century, when land was divided into smaller portions than it is at present, was considered one of the most extensive agricultural establishments in the county of Fife. Mr Landel was a plain but enterprising man. When he entered upon his lease, he possessed considerable capital; and as the fields of Riddleglen were then unenclosed, and many of them entirely lost with water, he commenced improvements upon a very extensive scale. Marshes were drained, stones and fragments of rock quarried out and removed, dykes erected, and barren land brought into cultivation. Nor was this all: he began that process of manuring with lime which had been very little attended to previous to his day, though it has since produced most amazing effects on the productiveness of the soil, and is now considered indispensable in every judicious system of agriculture. By these means he enriched his fields and impoverished himself. He had the prospect, however, that the money thus laid out would return to him again with a valuable profit. He had had a large family, all of whom he instructed in the strictest principles of industry and frugality. His daughter, Harriet, a beautiful girl about twelve years of age, attended the school with her little sisters and brothers, and assisted the housemaid to milk the cows, and churn the cream in the evenings. There were no idle hands about the farm of Riddleglen. Even the youngest of the family had some useful task to perform.

The proprietor of Riddleglen was an old man, of a quiet and benevolent disposition; but his mind, which had never been powerful, weakened by the infirmities of age, had, at length, sunk into all the simplicity of childhood. He had never mingled with mankind, and he was so little acquainted with their manners and characters, that the fairest speaker always appeared to him the worthiest man. He was thus led to select his favourites from the least deserving of his acquaintances; and, though he was often imposed upon, sometimes so grossly that the cheat could not be overlooked, the guilty individuals generally contrived to manage matters so adroitly, that the injured laird was only rendered a greater dupe and a greater sufferer by his discovery. An artful assumption of being greatly hurt by his suspicions, along with a cunning explanation of the circumstances which occasioned them, seasoned with the necessary modicum of flattery, was usually sufficient to make the old man weep at his own cruelty, and recompense the skilful rogue by a liberal reward for the blame which he believed him to have innocently endured.

During the lifetime of Mrs Honeybride, who was a shrewd and intelligent woman, she managed all the business on the estate of Riddleglen with the greatest prudence; and the laird, who neither visited nor entertained visiters among his own class, had nothing to do but amuse himself with his labourers and other domestics, to whom his good-nature and simple manners made him a familiar companion rather than a respected master. But with this they would not be satisfied, and a sort of secret contention for favour was frequently carried on among them.

One of the most enterprising of these contending parties was William Winkleton, the least skilful ploughman on the whole estate. Willie pursued his own interest by his own means. He entrusted no one with his secrets, and never asked advice or assistance in contriving or executing his plans. He seemed determined that, if they were successful, no one should share the honour or profit of his persevering cunning but himself. Time proved the sagacity of his resolution. His first achievement was a splendid one: it consisted of rooting out the old foreman, without shewing the means by which it was accomplished, and getting himself firmly planted in his place. Willie was thus elevated, by his own concealed efforts, to the highest official dignity which it was possible for him to attain in the service of Mr Honeybride. He had no superior but the lady; and he was too wise to make any attempt to direct her conduct, or limit her power; but the laird himself was completely under his control, in all matters which lay beyond the range of Mrs Honeybride's interference. It was not without alarm, however, that he beheld a potent rival growing up in the person of the laird's only son. The boy had early shewn a marked dislike for his long stories and flattering manners; and, what was worse, he had chosen the children of Mrs Landel, in preference to Willie's, for his associates and playmates. With them he always went to, and returned from school; and he frequently spent the evenings in their company, listening to Mr Landel's stories, and Harriet's songs, and sometimes joining in the other mental exercises to which the rest of the children devoted their time. Willie tried every plan which his ingenuity could invent to break off this correspondence. He first endeavoured to persuade the old laird that it was beneath the dignity of his son to associate with the children of his tenants; but this scheme proved abortive, for Mr Honeybride was entirely destitute of the pride of rank; and the boy had got too much of his own will before, to be easily controlled in such matters, even though his father had been desirous of exerting his authority for that purpose. The next attempt was made upon the youth himself. He was rallied upon the necessity of "pulling up his spirit," and choosing his companions from the families of some neighbouring gentlemen of equal rank with his father. But he was here foiled; and, as he could not be idle, he turned his attention to other specu lations.

Old Widow Marybank had enjoyed the privilege of pasturing a cow upon the estate of Riddleglen ever since the death of her husband, who had been Willie Winkleton's predecessor in the office of foreman and overseer on the farm; and Willie's first speculation was how to get this cow, which was said to give more milk than any other cow in the parish, for himself, without incurring the charge of covetousness. For this purpose he went by night to a young plantation, of which both the laird and lady were particularly fond, and, by peeling off the bark, breaking the branches and cropping the foliage of the trees, in such a manner as to make it

appear that the whole had been the work of the animal in question, he succeeded in incensing the laird against the widow, and would have succeeded in making him deprive her of her pasture-ground, and getting the cow into his own possession, had it not been for Mrs Honeybride, who absolutely refused her sanction to such a proceeding.

Willie's disappointment was heart-breaking; but he was obliged to bear it without complaint. The only alleviation which his case admitted of, was derived from the expectation of better luck in the new plots which he was busily employed in concocting for the furtherance of his original design. A melancholy event, however, which occurred shortly afterwards, rendered these machinations unnecessary, just when they were about to be brought into operation.

Mrs Honeybride, who had caught cold in an evening excursion to the hill, became rapidly worse. Medical assistance was called; but it was too late. A violent inflammation of the lungs had already commenced; and the most powerful antiphlogistic treatment proved inadequate to its removal. She died, leaving her simple-hearted husband and youthful son to the management of no better a counsellor than old Willie Winkleton. The laird's grief for the loss of his lady entirely overwhelmed any little activity of mind which he previously possessed. The management of the estate of Riddleglen, and also of its confiding proprietor, was therefore intrusted to Willie; who, emboldened by his newly-acquired authority, and freed from every obstacle which had previously interfered with the execution of his plan, turned his attention immediately to the case of the widow's cow. He still deemed it best to act as if by the laird's commands; for, by doing so, he avoided the disgrace which would otherwise have attended his conduct.

After due consideration, he again set off for the widow's cottage, and again entered it and addressed her with all his usual friendly familiarity of manner. The death of Mrs Honeybride being the most important event which had recently occurred in the neighbourhood, formed, for a time, their principle subject of conversation; and, as Willie was desirous of making known the object of his visit as speedily as possible, he very dexterously made a remark by the widow upon that event serve the purpose of an introduction to his own story.

"Ay, ay, Mrs Marybank," said he, with a mournful look, "things are sadly altered at Riddleglen House since the guid leddy's death. Baith you an' me hae lost the best feather in our wing, I fear; for the laird, though a canny body, is baith conceitit an' greedy, an' sometimes—may Guid forgie me for sayin sae o' my maister—he's selfish an' senseless too in his dealins. But Mrs Honeybride was a prudent an' charitable Christian; an' there's nane that can manage him like her, noo whan he taks his dour tids. Had it no been for her supportin my endeavours to persuade him to let you keep Hawkie, when he was for buyin her, they wad hae been utterly ineffectual. I warstled sair wi' him, baith by reason an' scripture, an' tell't him o' the fate o' Nabel,* wha coveted the puir man's vineyard, an' fell a prey to the dogs. But even this wadna hae altered his resolution, if the guid leddie hadna acted a different part frae that o' Jezebel. She seconded my remonstrances, however, an' the notion was overcome. But what signifies that, Lizzy, the leddie's awa, an' the auld notion's come back again—na, I'm sorry to say, its a waur notion than the auld ane; for, instead o' Hawkie, he threatens to tak Hawkie's pasture noo, sae that ye'll naither can keep her nor ony ither beast o' her kind, an' I'm again made the melancholy messenger, as ye see, o' the sad intelligence."

The poor widow burst into tears, and wept for some time in silence. Willie made a fruitless attempt to comfort her; but her eldest son, a high-spirited boy, casting a suspicious glance on the overseer, turned to his mother and said—

"Let them tak it a', mother. If we do not get the laird's grass, I will not need to run his errands. I will leave the school and work for you and my sisters; and if we can buy milk for ourselves, we will be no man's slaves for a cow."

"Hooly, Jamie!—hooly, lad!" said Willie. "You're ower fiery, I trow. Mind the auld proverb, my man, an' dinna aye throw awa the pail when the cow flings. If ye keep temper wi' the laird, ye may get muckle mair guid o'm, considerin that ye hae a friend in the court, than a' that ye'll loss by the takin o' the cow-gang. An' ye'll loss naething by the beast hersel, I warrant ye; for, as I am empowered to purchase her, an' as the laird is weel able to pay for her, ye'll hae richt an' reason administered in the bargain-makin."

"I'm muckle obleeged to ye for yer guid advice an' guid intentions, Mr Winkleton," said the widow. "It's very true what you say, that Jamie's ower fiery: puir fo'k maun just jouk till the jaw gae by, an' suffer ae wrang to avoid anither. But, savin the death o' my guidman, this is the sairest stroke I hae met wi' yet. Were it no for the bairnies, puir things, the loss o' the cow would be less to mysel; but they hae been lang used wi' sap, an' it's a waefu thing to think aboot them suppin dry brose, an' no mony o' them either; for it was Hawkie that produced baith milk an' meal till us."

"It's a sair thocht for a mither that," said Willie, assuming a look of pity, which seemed natural to his practised countenance; "but things may turn out better than ye fear, Lizzy. The laird may relent a bit, an' mak up for the loss o' the cow in some ither way. But noo that yer come to think calmly on the subject, what do you consider the value o' the beast; for I'm in a hurry to be hame; an' if we could come to a bargain enoo, it wud save me the trouble o' comin back again sae soon?"

"O Mr Winkleton," said the widow, "I canna tell ye what she is worth; I maun just leave that to yer ain judgment, an' yer ain conscience."

Willie now proposed that they should go to the byre and look at the cow, after which they would be better qualified to calculate her value. This was agreed to; and, after feeling her over and over with professional care, and finding a few virtues, and more faults in her form and constitution, the sapient overseer at length concluded—

"That nae man wad be far wrang wi' her at sax pounds o' price."

"She just cost me that money twa years syne, when she was only a quey," said the widow; "an' I dinna think she's turned ony waur in my keepin; but every body kens that there's an odds o' market days, Mr Winkleton; an' though she's baith muckler an fatter since I coft her, she may be worth less siller for oucht that I ken."

"Ay, that's it—that's it, Lizzy," said the overseer, twitching up his trousers with pleasureable excitement. "Different days mak different prices; but we'll no stick upon twa or three shillins above the value o' the beast; for a puir body's bargain should aye be a lucky ane."

As Willie concluded, Jamie came to the byre door, and cried—

"Mother, here is Mr Landel wantin ye."

"He's weel come," said the widow. "Ask him to step into the byre, Jamie. He's a skilfu' man in the markets, an' we'll hear what he says is the worth o' Hawkie."

Willie looked a little disconcerted. He seemed to think three too many at a bargain-making; but there was no possibility of avoiding the threatened intrusion.

"I'm glad to see ye, sir," said the widow. as Mr Landel

* Willie seems to have made a slight mistake in the name.

entered. "Will ye be sae guid as look at my Hawkie here, an' say what ye think she's worth."

The farmer cast a hurried glance over the animal, and said—

"Though I trust that ye are not under the necessity of parting wi' your cow, Mrs Marybank, I would hae nae hesitation in offering you eight pounds for her as a first bode; and, rather than break the bargain, I might advance a little in my second."

The widow looked quite confounded by the difference between the overseer's and the farmer's valuations; and even Willie's imperturbable face shewed some marks of confusion; but he soon recovered his composure.

"Ye surely haena been at the markets lately, Mr Landel," he remarked, with an affected laugh. "That's last year's price yer offerin for this year's beast, man. If ye but saw the London papers, as our laird does, they wad tell ye o' a fell dooncome i' the value o' baith kye an' cattle there; an' the Englishers, it's weel kenned, aye rule the prices wi' us Scotch bodies."

"That may be, William," said Mr Landel; "but, though I still think the cow worth a' the money I hae mentioned, as Mrs Marybank does not intend to sell her, we need not gie ourselves the trouble of inquiring very particularly into the state of the markets at the present time."

"Oh, sir, I *maun* sell her," said the widow, with a deep sigh. "Mr Winkleton has just brought word frae the laird, that she's to get nae mair pasture on the estate o' Riddleglen; an' lest I should be obleeged to part wi' the beast at a wanworth, he kindly offers to gie a reasonable price for her."

"Oh, if this is the case," said Mr Landel, casting a satirical glance at the overseer, "there was some reason to consult the London prints. But if the Laird of Riddleglen is unable to afford a bite of grass to a widow's cow, perhaps the tenant may, and no miss it muckle. She shall neither want for summer's pasture nor winter's fodder, Lizzy, as lang as I hae a lea-rig to gang upon, or a corn-stack to thrash, sae ye'll just keep the band upon Hawkie's neck, and Mr Winkleton may keep the string about his purse's mouth, which will save ye baith the trouble of a dubious bargain."

"May the blessin o' God be wi' ye, sir!" said the widow. "His promise never fails, though I was amaist inclined to doot it when I heard o' the laird's determination; but your kindness, sir, convinces me that he is still the husband o' the widow, an' the orphan's stay."

Willie was thus once more disappointed of his object, in a manner which he could not have expected. Besides the failure of his scheme, the deceitfulness of his conduct was partly exposed, and he went home in a state of mind not easily described; for he knew that the possession of a fair public character facilitated the progress of his secret plans, and that if his honesty were once suspected, people would be more cautious in their dealings with him, which would render his purposes more difficult to execute, and less profitable, perhaps, when accomplished.

Mr Landel had long been an object of envy in his eyes, and he once made an unsuccessful attempt to break the correspondence which existed between his family and the young laird. Since then he had acquired greater power, and a better reason for exerting it; for, though he never manifested his resentment openly to any one, he was deeply displeased at the farmer's opposition to his favourite scheme, and deeply hurt at the satirical manner in which he treated his valuation of the widow's cow. The whole force of his crafty mind was therefore directed to the formation of some plan whereby he might humble this rival in his young master's favour, and procure vengeance for a supposed injury.

It might be thought that Mr Landel was perfectly independent of the malicious efforts of Willie Winkleton, but who can resist

> "The patient search and vigil long
> Of him who treasures up a wrong."

There was one circumstance upon which he hoped to found a quarrel between the laird and the farmer, or rather, between the farmer and himself: Mr Landel, in the course of his improvements, had cropped one of the fields contrary to the rotation stipulated in the lease; and this, though in itself but a trifling matter, might afford a pretext for claiming damages, or for instituting a law-suit if these damages were refused. Willie, however, thought it best, in the first place, to try some plan to get the young laird removed to a distance, lest he should influence his father, and prevent the operation of the proposed plan. After mature consideration, the wily overseer, or factor, as he was now called, determined to press upon the laird's attention the necessity of sending his son to Edinburgh. He also resolved to ply the young man himself with the advantages of such an education.

"I wonder, Mr Frederic," he said, the first time they met, "hoo ye can thole to drudge sae lang back an fore, mornin and nicht, to the parish school, wi' yer books on yer back like a mere cottar's son. I'm sure ye've gotten a' the lear lang syne that Dominie Canekurpins has to gie; an dinna ye think, that it wad be far liker your station in society, to gang to the college, or the *'Cademy*, whare a' the young gentlemen gang to learn science an manners, than to be losin yer time wi' that auld drucken, snuffy, guid-for-naething body o' a parish schoolmaster. 'Deed, sir, if ye never get nae mair insight aboot philosophy than he can gie ye, ye'll just be as awkward as a *juck* among a flock o' peacocks, whan ye begin to keep company wi' the braw college bred gentry, whas heads are sae fu' o' knowledge, that they wad ding ye clean doitit wi' their cracks."

The young man had accidently met with the eldest son of Sir Robert Dashwort a few days before, and he had experienced much of the truth of Willie's remarks in his short interview with that polite and accomplished person. He was, therefore, the more inclined to listen to the factor's suggestions, which were continued as follows:—

"Ye've never seen Edinburg, Mr Frederic. I ance cam through't wi' a drove o' cattle frae the Loudans; an there was sae mony grand hooses, an kirks, an castles, an' steeples, an monuments aboot it, that they gart my very een reel. If ye were to live a twalmonth or twa there, an' attend the college classes, an see a' the wonders o' the place, ye wad be able to crack wi' the best o' them when ye cam back again; an the leddies an gentlemen wad be a' daft aboot yer company. But, without a genteel education, ye can never expect to be admitted into ony higher circle than that o' farmer Landel or siclike. Noo, sir, I think ye canna do better than consult yer faither aboot this matter without delay; for ilka wise man alloos, that youth is the time to gather knowledge; an', if it is passed unimproved, the best formed head may be but a dunderhead a' its days."

The young man confessed that he had often thought upon the subject; and said, that he determined to go to either Edinburgh or St Andrew's to complete his education; but that in consideration of his mother's death, he had felt a strong reluctance to make such a proposition to his father, who, he was certain, would feel the solitude of Riddleglen unsufferable in his absence.

"Weel, sir," said Willie, "I'm just delighted to hear ye. Ye speak just like a dutifu' son, an there's nae character on earth mair amiable; but ye owe a duty to yersel as weel as to yer parent, an I hae nae doot, if ye mak the proposal wi' discreetness, but he'll listen till't we pleasure. It's true he'll feel the auld hoose solitary in your absence;

but, believin it to be for the benefit o baith you an' him, an' bein' bound, as a dutifu servant, to labour an' advise, accordin to my wisdom and ability, in a' things pertainin to the weelfare o' my maister's hoose, I promise ye that I'll exert mysel to the utmost to gain his consent to your purpose, and also to divert his mind in your absence."

Willie being at length fully assured that his young master's inclination, in the present instance, accorded exactly with his own, lost no time in making the old laird acquainted with the subject. Every argument was employed which could influence him to comply with the request which his son had been previously prompted to make; and the desired result, though some time doubtful, was at length obtained. By Willie's advice, Edinburgh was preferred to St Andrew's, as the scene of the young man's studies; and lodgings were hired, and other preparations made, for his speedy departure. For several days, Mr Frederic seemed highly elated with the prospect before him. He longed to begin the life of a gentleman, and to see the curiosities of the Scottish capital; and he even shewed some degree of respect and gratitude to the old factor, for the interest he had taken in his affairs. But when the day came on which he was to commence his journey, all his fine fancies had vanished, and he could have been content to live a boor in his paternal home, and pass his days in the society of the Landels, rather than seek, among strangers, that knowledge and refinement which might qualify him to move in a higher circle.

Mr Honeybride's affairs now fell wholly into the hands of his factor, who was constantly by his side, and permitted no one to communicate with him through any other medium. He seldom went out; and his observing faculties were so feeble, that he collected little information for himself when he did. He knew nothing of his own business, save what Willie thought proper to tell him; and all that he could do was to hear his reports, and sanction the measures which he proposed. The laird's power was, therefore, often employed to advance the interest and avenge the quarrels of the factor. This was so well known in the neighbourhood, that every one said it would be safer to knock down Mr Honeybride than to touch the corny toe of Willie Winkleton.

Willie no longer deemed it necessary to preserve his originally humble deportment. As factor, he was now empowered to collect the rents on the Riddleglen estate; and the change which had taken place in his circumstances and manners, was particularly observable the first time that he acted in this capacity. Being but an indifferent reader, and totally ignorant of the art of writing, he found it necessary to associate his own learning with that of his son in the discharge of his official duties. Willie counted the cash, and the young man kept the books and gave receipts which he copied from an old arithmetical work which always lay open beside him.

Mr Landel was duly summoned, along with the other farmers and householders on the property, to appear before these important personages, for the purpose of paying his rent. The factor's enmity to this individual had long been concealed under the mask of friendship, but he now found himself in circumstances to give vent to his natural feelings without fear. He, accordingly, treated Mr Landel with the greatest indifference. After his rent was paid, the farmer turned to leave the room; but he was again recalled, and churlishly informed, that there was still more business to be settled. Willie then instructed his son to read over a paper which had been previously prepared, charging him with miscropping one of his fields, and claiming a large amount of damages in behalf of the proprietor for this breach of bargain. Mr Landel readily admitted that he had cropped the field referred to, for a single season, contrary to the rotation stipulated in the lease: but this, he asserted, was done with a view to the ultimate improvement of the farm, and with the consent and approbation of Mrs Honeybride, who then transacted the business of the estate for her husband. But, as he had no documents to prove the truth of this assertion, and as the factor was more desirous of a quarrel than a settlement, he refused all terms, and referred the affair to the decision of law.

It was in vain that Mr Landel appealed to the laird: he only answered, that he had resigned the management of his business into the hands of his factor, and could not interfere; and the farmer had no alternative but to allow the threatened suit to proceed. He determined upon this course the more readily, because, though he was convinced, from the peculiarity of the case, that it would be decided against him, he could not help thinking that the penalties of law would be less severe than those of Willie Winkleton. He, accordingly, appointed Mr Dental to defend his cause against Mr Swicket, a rival lawyer of the same town, who was employed to act as pursuer in behalf of Mr Honeybride.

We shall not weary the patience of the reader with an uninteresting history of the tedious process which followed. Summonses were served, witnesses examined, interlocutors published, protests entered, and appeals made; and, when twelve months had passed away, the case had been three times tried, at a great expense to Mr Landel, and still remained undecided. The lawyers were rivals in business, their constituents were supposed to be men of substance, and the longer they could defer a settlement the better for themselves. Mr Landel, however, had laid out the most of his capital in improving his farm; and, as his resources began to fail, his man of business began to abate in his activity; and, when he at length discovered that there was no hope of further remuneration, he also extinguished the false hopes which he had previously excited in his deluded client. The farmer thus found himself stripped of everything but his stock and his character; and with these, had other circumstances been favourable, he might have still acted an independent part in the world, and set the malicious factor and all other enemies at defiance. But fortune seemed more favourable to the crafty designs of Willie Winkleton than to the honest efforts of Mr Landel.

The law-suit mentioned in the foregoing paragraphs was just concluded at the commencement of the first of those barren seasons, which occurred at the end of the last, and the beginning of the present century, and which have since been remembered in Scotland by the name of the "Dear years." Mr Landel's farm was situated in a late part of the country; and, notwithstanding that he had done much to improve it, many of the fields were still cold and wet, requiring a dry summer and a great deal of sunshine to ripen their crops in proper time for having them secured before winter. The season referred to was, therefore, particularly unfavourable for this soil and climate, and the consequence was, when the usual harvest months occurred, the crops, instead of exhibiting the rich yellow colour of maturity, presented a sickly green, mottled here and there with spots of light gray, which gave the fields an uncommon and unpleasing appearance. Mr Landel's harvest commenced about a week before Martinmas; and it was found, that though the straw was moderately rank, the ears were whitened but not filled, and the grain was so light and husky, that it seemed only fit for feeding cattle, and entirely useless for ordinary purposes.

After much anxiety and many hardships had been endured by the reapers—servants and master—the last stooks were secured in the barnyard, on the evening of New Year's Day; and the humble feast which was usually given to the ploughmen, reapers, and cottars, upon that occasion, served both for their harvest-home and their hogmanay. Many masters in Mr Landel's circumstances would

have made no feast at all; but he had often remarked, that it was not by entertaining a few poor labouring men and women that fortunes were dissipated; and he determined not to break through a simple and inexpensive custom on the last year that he might have it in his power to observe it.

Widow Marybank and her son occupied an honoured place among the rustic guests who that evening assembled in the spence of the old farm house. They had both been active in their exertions to secure the crop of their employer and friend. They had frequently gone out in the coldest nights, and laboured till morning, by the light of the moon, for the purpose of saving some portion of it which was then dry, but which the next shower of rain or snow would have rendered unfit for the stack-yard. These services were highly appreciated by Mr Landel. He had aided the individuals by whom they were performed in their adversity, while his own fortune seemed flourishing; and he respected them still, though ruin appeared to be hovering over himself as well as them.

Mr Landel, as has been said, once possessed a considerable capital, but he had laid out the most of it on the fields of Riddleglen, expecting that he would have time enough to gather it in again before the expiration of the lease. What remained had been lost at law, and he now found himself at the mercy, not of his landlord, but of Willie Winkleton, from whom he had little mercy to expect. The widow and her son had been under the displeasure of the same personage ever since he was disappointed in his scheme to deprive them of their cow. Their fortune was, therefore, involved with that of their protector, and both families seemed destined to speedy ruin by the unfavourable season and the unremitting malice of their common enemy.

Mr Landel thrashed out a considerable portion of his crop; but when he took it to market, he found that scarcely any one would purchase it. Though the demand was good, and though grain of ordinary quality sold extremely high, his was so unfit for either malt or meal, that the price which he received was considerably under the average of ordinary years. The straw too, though abundant, was unwholsome, having been mostly stacked in a damp condition; and it occasioned a disease among his cattle, which destroyed nearly a third part of the whole stock. Rent-day approached, the first that he had ever been unprepared to meet; and, when all his money was collected, he found that it did not amount to half the sum required. He knew that forbearance was not to be expected, and he determined not to solicit it; but he felt it hard to be driven out from the farm upon which he had spent his whole fortune, for want of a little money to answer an emergency, and enable him to reap the fruits of his labours. Under this impression, he made application to several farmers with whom he was on friendly terms, for the loan of as much money as would clear his way with the factor; but he found them all either unable or unwilling to assist him. Widow Marybank, alone, came forward, and, with tears in her eyes, begged his acceptance of a small sum which she had saved from the wages of her labour, and the produce of her cow. This he gratefully declined, because he was well aware that anything less than what would enable him to keep his farm, and set the factor at defiance, would only injure the friend from whom he received it, and enrich his enemy, without benefiting himself.

When the day came, he attended as usual; and, in accordance with those sterling principles of honesty which had regulated his conduct in times of prosperity, and gained him respect in the eyes of men, and which now raised him to the highest elevation of heroic virtue, without procuring him the regard of a single individual, he paid down all the money which he possessed of his own, which was considerably more than all that had been received for the produce of the farm in the course of the season. The factor—who seemed no longer Willie Winkleton, being provided with a pair of elegant silver clasped spectacles, and a richly powdered wig—counted over the notes with the most dignified composure; and when he had finished his task, he inquired, in a tone as pompous though less polished than his dress—

"What has become of the unpaid penalty, and of the residue of your rent, Mr Landel."

"It is scattered on the fields of Riddleglen," said the farmer, with a satirical smile. "I suppose," he continued, "you intend to gather it off for yourself, Mr Winkleton; at least, I believe it will not accord with your purpose to give me time to collect it."

"An' what is my purpose, sir, do ye say?" inquired the factor, unfolding his thick lips, and inflating his broad cheeks, with the expression of a most magnificent passion. "Do you presume, sir, to bring an *acquisition* against me, for entertaining ony purpose or motive *contrary* to my high calling, or *submersive* of my maister's interest? If sae be the case, I can only warn ye o' yer danger, for Mr Swicket will be as ready to pursue for the *definition* o' character as for the miscrapping of land."

Notwithstanding his misfortunes, Mr Landel could not help laughing outright at Willie's wonderful acquisitions in language. He seemed to think that his silver-clasped spectacles, powdered wig, and "high calling," required a loftier style than that he had been accustomed to use; but, instead of applying to the dictionary for the materials of speech, he was only induced to listen more attentively to the sermon on Sabbath; and, as neither the pastor's pronunciation nor the factor's hearing were of the most perfect description, he frequently caught strange remnants and modifications of words, which gave his utterance a pleasing peculiarity. Mr Landel's laughter increased his passion; and, without waiting for an answer to his previous questions, he again resumed his address.

"Ay, ay, sir—that's richt. Ye may enjoy yer *exaltation* as loudly as ye like; but, if ye hae nae mair siller than this to spare, I can tell ye, it'll be short; for ye may look for an action of caption and horning, besides an *infeftment* to be execute upon your effects for *distraint* o' rent, before anither fortnight gangs by; and ye'll laugh, I warrant ye, when ye see the blankets flappin i' the wund on the roup day."

After a fruitless attempt to see the laird, Mr Landel returned home, fully convinced that the factor's threat would soon be accomplished—and he was not mistaken; for, in due time, Mr Swicket and his assistants made their appearance, and went through the process of sequestration with professional delicacy, which is often as disagreeable as non-professional rudeness. The farmer was now destitute of the means of procuring law; and he was, therefore, obliged to submit to whatever treatment the pursuer and his agents thought fit to offer. The roup was hurried on with the greatest precipitation; and, as it was to take place by the sheriff's warrant, Mr Landel was not permitted to fix the day. The season was of itself sufficiently unfavourable, few people being then possessed of money to purchase stock; but it was rendered still more so by some crafty contrivance, which brought on the sale on the same day as that on which a much-frequented fair was held in the neighbourhood. The result of this was a very small attendance of *bidders*; and the stock and crop were, accordingly, sold off at one-half less than their marketable value. The factor's son, Mr Henry Winkleton, was the principal purchaser.

After the agricultural implements and the produce of the farm had been disposed of, the auctioneer turned to the factor, and inquired if the business was now concluded.

"Na, na, sir, said Willie, with a laugh of malignant triumph; "yer but through wi' the outside wark yet. Ye maun gang to the hoose noo, and try yer hands on the blankets and the bedsteads."

The party moved off to the house; and Mrs Landel came out, leaning on her daughter's arm, and followed by the rest of the family, as they entered. She appeared as if she had been recently weeping; but her countenance now displayed that decent composure which a modest woman, in the most distressing circumstances, will ever exhibit to strangers. Widow Marybank and her son met the mother and her children at the door; and, after whispering a few words of pity into the ear of her late mistress, the widow followed the other purchasers, and her son conducted the homeless family to his mother's cottage. The household furniture, like the farm-stock, was selling at half price; and Mr Henry Winkleton, as before, was almost the only *bidder*. Mr Landel, who did not believe that the cruelty of his enemies would proceed so far, had neglected to solicit some one to purchase back for him a few articles which were absolutely necessary to the future accommodation of his family; and he now saw these articles given to his persecutor almost without a price. He sat down on a chair, which was soon to be the property of another, and, clasping his hands over his eyes, uttered a faint groan of suppressed anguish.

The auctioneer advanced to one of the beds, and cried—

"Here is a splendid article, gentlemen—almost as good as new. How much do you bid me for it?"

"Six shillings," said Henry Winkleton.

"Aha! six shillings," repeated the man with the hammer. "Here is a good bode at first, gentleman. Going, going, just agoing!"

"Seven shillings," said Widow Marybank.

"Seven shillings!" resumed the crier, raising his hammer. "Don't lose yourselves, gentlemen. Seven shillings is bid!"

"Eight shillings," said Henry Winkleton.

"Better yet," said the auctioneer. "Eight shillings, gentleman! Going, going, go"——

"Nine shillings." said the widow, turning to her competitor with a look of as much contempt as her mild countenance could express. He received it with a scornful smile, and was just raising his head to make another bode, when an old man of the company stepped before him, and said—

"If the curse o' God doesna follow ye, Winkleton, it canna be because it isna deserved. He has said, if ye injure a widow or a fatherless child, if they cry at all unto me, I will avenge them. Hae a fear o' the widow, if ye hae a care o' yersel, young man."

The auctioneer was ashamed to wait till Henry was again at liberty to offer, and the bed was *knocked down* in the widow's name. Young Winkleton was so cut by the old man's reproof, that he soon left the house; and, as no one else seemed willing to buy, Mrs Marybank secured most of the other articles at a moderate price, which she paid to the clerk immediately. Few of our readers will require to be told in whose behalf the philanthropic widow laid out her little fortune; but they cannot guess, nor can we portray the lively gratitude with which Mr Landel and his family found themselves again in possesion of the most necessary part of their furniture. But there was still another difficulty to overcome. According to the circumstances of the case, it was the farmer's right to remain another half year in the house; but he wanted money to enforce it. He was, therefore, thrown out of his house; and, though he had recovered his beds and bedclothes, he had no house to convey them to. The friendship of the widow, however, had provided for this emergency also. She had heard of the factor's intentions; and, while her son went to bespeak a small cottage in a neighbouring village for the accommodation of the outcasts, she made application to a farmer of her acquaintance for a cart to convey them thither. Everything was thus prepared for their immediate removal to this new home; but it was such a home as the unfortunate only would enter—small, damp, and dark—fireless, foodless, and cheerless. Those who were to inhabit it had neither money to purchase subsistence, nor the prospect of any employment by which they could earn it. But we must leave them to their fate, and follow out, a little farther, the familiar history of our hero the factor.

As the consummation of his cunningly-concerted and ably-executed scheme, Mr Winkleton had no sooner got Mr Landel dismissed, than he applied for the farm in behalf of his son Henry. This request was instantly complied with by the weak-minded laird; and the joyful factor considered his own fortune, and the fortune of his family, as being completely secured. Henry took possession of the farm; but, instead of expelling Widow Marybank, as she expected, he offered her the cottage which she occupied, and a cow's pasture, at a moderate rent, and tried to engage her son as a servant upon the farm. Had it not been for his mother, the young man would have rejected this proposal with scorn; but all his exertions to obtain employment elsewhere had proved unsuccessful, and he saw no alternative between accepting a disagreeable offer and absolute starvation. The bargain was, therefore, settled; and James commenced his labours with a master whose conduct his heart detested. He soon discovered that the preference shewn for him, and the favours bestowed upon his mother by Mr Henry, were attributable to a girlish fancy which had been silently entertained for his person by Miss Mabel Winkleton, the young farmer's sister. Mabel, who now came to keep her brother's house, was a fair-haired, blue-eyed, broad-faced, strong-built beauty—one who would have been perfect among the Moors or Chinese—"a model for painters to study." Her influence with her father and brother had procured a reversal of the widow's sentence, by which she obtained the privilege of courting the widow's son; and, if handsome presents of pease-bread and butter, a disposition to laugh whenever he spoke, and a facility for introducing love-dreams—of which he was always the subject—into every conversation, could have won the young man's affections, she had not wooed in vain.

The young Laird of Riddleglen had neither returned nor been publicly heard of since he went to Edinburgh. His father had assumed the most penurious appearance in his style of living; and he frequently complained to the servants that he was brought to beggary by the arrears of his tenants, and the expenses of his son's travels. The infirmities of his mind were increased by these grievances. He had long been childish; he now became peevish; and, ultimately, insane. Sir Robert Dashwort, who accidentally heard of Mr Honeybride's condition, and who knew that his son was absent, and that no person of approved character had been appointed to manage his affairs, took the liberty to call upon the factor, and asked some questions which Mr Winkleton considered impertinent, and refused to answer. The proud baronet seemed highly offended at this reception, and he rode off without uttering another word.

By this time, the second bad crop was nearly ready to reap. The summer's drought had been severe. Frosty nights, and days intensely hot, had hurried the scanty harvest into a state of premature ripeness; and oat-meal, which was then the principal article of food among the peasantry of Scotland, rose, as stated in a former tale of these years, to the famishing price of three shillings and sixpence per peck. Both the growers and consumers of

grain were thus reduced to the most distressing circumstances; for the farmers had high rents to pay, and little produce to sell, while the poor labourers and mechanics had mostly low wages, and large families to support. But Mr Winkleton and his son shewed no signs of scarcity: they seemed flourishing in the middle of want and suffering. Miss Mabel even got a riding-dress and a pony to amuse herself with—which was an indulgence, at that period, never allowed to the daughters of the wealthiest farmers, nor even to those of the small proprietors of the place. James Marybank was frequently honoured to lead out this pony in the evenings, for the purpose of learning the would-be young lady to ride; and, upon these occasions, he invariably received from her fair hands a massy *pease-bannock*, doubled together, with a thick coat of fresh-butter between the folds.

One evening after the commencement of harvest, it happened to be the pleasure of Miss Mabel to take an airing along the road which led between the village of Mantleton and the farm of Hayfield; and James was called upon to squire her as usual. Her conversation soon turned upon love-songs, love-dreams, love-charms, love-locks, and all the other epithets and usages of the winning art. James led on and listened, but seemed extremely dull for a trusted and courted lover. A sharp turn of the road brought them suddenly upon a young girl who lay stretched at full length by the side of it. A reaper's hook lay before her, and she held a few ears of wheat in her hand, which she seemed to be rubbing out and eating for food, while her day's allowance of bread also lay beside her unbroken.

"It is Harriet Landel," said Miss Mabel in a whisper. "Let us go back, James—let us go back." James made no answer; but, quitting his hold of the reins, he hurried forward to the girl. Her once cheerful and beautiful countenance was now pale as ashes, and stained with dark streaks of dust and sweat; her strength and spirits seemed completely exhausted; and the young man bent over her with an expression of tenderness which indicated a stronger attachment to the girl than Miss Mabel Winkleton had ever dreamed of. After a few hurried but affectionate questions, Harriet informed him that she was so far on her road home from the harvest field—that she felt sick and faint, and was unable to go further—that she had saved her bread for her father, mother, and sisters, who were now suffering severely for want of food—and that she had gathered and was eating the ears of wheat to enable her to carry it home to them. The young man pulled out his bread and butter, and, presenting it to the girl, said eagerly—

"Here is Mabel's bannock—eat this, Harriet."

"I cannot eat Miss Mabel's bread," was the reply. "To her lover it must be sweet," she continued, with a faint smile, "but it would stick in my throat, James." These words conveyed a gentle censure, which could not have been understood by any one but him to whom they were addressed. He blushed deeply, and was about to reply, when Miss Mabel called out to him to come and lead home her pony. He made no answer; and the summons was repeated in a louder and more angry tone.

"Lead hame the pony yourself, Miss," he at length said, in an irritated voice. "There are better folk than you in the world that are not able to walk, and yet have nae pony to ride on." The young lady immediately dismounted, and walked off with her beast; and James raised the exhausted girl in his arms, and bore her lightly along till they came within a quarter of a mile of the village; which distance she passed, with difficulty, on her own feet. When they had nearly reached Harriet's home, they met Mrs Landel, whose maternal anxiety had induced her to leave her bed and come forth to look for her daughter. A smile of joy beamed in her sunken eyes and emaciated countenance when she saw Harriet so well escorted.

"O Jamie," said she, "I'm glad to see ye, man. I thought you too had deserted us like the rest o' our fair weather freends."

"It's a fortnight yesterday," said James, "since I was here afore; but auld Winkleton, an' young Winkleton, an' Miss Mabel, have keepit me aye sae busy since then, that I havnae even gotten time to speer for my mither."

"Ay, Miss Mabel," said Mrs Landel, with a deep sigh; which implied some unpleasant and unuttered thought. When they entered the cottage, Harriet deposited the two black oaten loaves, which should have been used for her own breakfast and dinner, in her mother's lap. Mr Landel, who was too feeble to rise from his bed, first received his share of them; and what remained, was divided among the rest of the family, who devoured it in a few minutes without the aid of any other liquid but water.

After promising to return to-morrow evening, James left the cottage and proceeded homewards. Every person that he met by the way, accosted him with—

"Eh, Jamie, hae ye no heard the news? The young laird's come hame—a great big gentleman, wi' a grand carriage. There never was sic a nicht seen at Riddleglen as this. A' body's rejoicin but auld Willie Winkleton."

When James reached home, Miss Mabel was in the kitchen, but she left it, as he entered, without speaking. It was evident that his reign over the affections of the beauty, and the days of pease-bread and butter, were alike at an end. Next morning, his young master informed him that his attendance was required at Riddleglen House, and that he would be no more needed on the farm. He gathered and bundled up his little property, and, with a joyful heart, set off immediately for the mansion. The young laird was already out of bed, and engaged in an interesting conference with the factor before the door. James had no sooner made his appearance than he was recognised and called to his presence. The subject under discussion, was the condition of the tenants and cottagers upon the estate. Mr Winkleton represented it as quite enviable.

"Yer honour," said he, "wad just wonder to see the bodies sae comfortable. Yer respeckit faither has aye been sae kind to them, that Riddleglen is just like a green spat i' the middle o' a parched desert."

"They are just so comfortable," said James, tartly, "that I ken some o' them who are near starved to death."

"Indeed," said the young laird, "this must not be. How much meal have you in store, William?"

"I reckon there may be about twenty bows," said the factor; "but the servants hae to get their sax weeks' allowance out o' that."

"Make haste then, James," said the young laird, "and tell every cottager on the estate, and all that you think needful in the village, that the meal stored at Riddleglen will be sold at half price to-day at ten o'clock; and take this to clear your expenses." He put a small sum of money into the young man's hand, who instantly started at his utmost speed upon the happiest message he had ever been honoured to carry. His rapid progress from cottage to cottage was followed by exclamations of joy and gratitude. He soon reached the village. Harriet Landel had that morning been prevented from going out to her harvest work by a heavy dew which had rendered the grain unfit for cutting. She had therefore no prospect but that of passing the day with her family almost without food. To her he communicated the glad intelligence; but it did not seem to cheer her. He guessed the cause; and, putting the three shillings which he received from his young master into her hand, he said—

"The meal will be one-and-sixpence a peck—this will get two. Come at ten. Good morning, Harriet." He hurried off to give joy in other homes.

Long before the appointed hour, the house which contained the *girnel*, or store of meal, was surrounded by a whole host of half-famished children, maidens, and matrons; but there was now an expression of joyful expectation on their meagre countenances.

"Like life in death they smiled."

Exactly at the hour, Mr Winkleton appeared, with James as his assistant. The door was no sooner opened, than all rushed in. Harriet Landel came last; and, while every one pressed forward with the desire of being first served, she stood timidly behind the door, as if ashamed to be seen. James, who weighed the meal, while the factor drew the money, when nearly the whole company had been supplied, called upon her to come forward. She came; but it was with a step and look which indicated great agitation. James had the quantity of meal she required already weighed, and he put it into the bag and laid it on her shoulders. She put the price of it into his hand, and was about to retire, when Mr Winkleton stopped her, and said—

"Ye maun toom the pock again, my woman, for ye dinna belang to the boondary, and I canna be countable for sellin meal to them that are aff the ground." Harriet dropped the bag, and looked as if she too were about to drop on the floor.

"If you canna, I can be countable for sellin the meal," said James sternly—"If she's no on the ground, she should hae been on't; an' ye ken by wha and by what means she was driven aff't." Mr Winkleton got into a violent passion, and the quarrel seemed likely to end in worse than words; but the young laird entered, and the factor became as meek as a saint in an instant. Harriet endeavoured to steal off unobserved, but James recalled her. The mention of her name attracted Mr Frederic's attention; and, though much altered since they parted, he at once recognised her as his earliest and most intimate companion. Seizing her hand with the graceful ease which he had acquired by acquaintance with the world, and the genuine warmth of his own benevolent nature, he inquired for her own health, and the health of her father and mother. He said that he would call upon them in an hour or two; and bade her tell Mr Landel that he expected him to follow his example by opening his stores for the benefit of the poor, who were suffering so severely from the hard times.

Mr Winkleton's broad red face grew as white as a turnip, and Harriet's coloured to the deepest crimson. Mr Frederic marked their confusion, and looked first to one and then to the other for some explanation, but none of them spoke. James seized the opportunity, and said—

"I suppose, sir, frae what I heard you say just enoo that the factor here hasna informed ye yet that Mr Landel was set oot o' his farm; and his ain son, Henry Winkleton, set in."

"Mr Landel out of his farm?" exclaimed the young laird, greatly surprised. "What do you mean? How is this, William? Why did Mr Landel lose his farm? and how did your son get money to stock it?"

The trembling factor began a long explanation about miscropping, law expenses, penalties, and arrears of rent; but, before he came to the most difficult part of his statement, a servant entered, and put a letter into Mr Frederic's hand, which he instantly opened, and glanced hurriedly over. Then, addressing himself to the factor, he inquired—

"What is the meaning of this, William? Here is a cabinet-maker's account, charging my father thirty pounds for furniture, which I did not see in the house."

The factor scratched his head, and looked exceedingly stupid; but, after some minutes' silent consideration, he replied—

"There maun be some mistak in this, sir—some mistak, withoot a dout; but I canna count for't yet. Let me see! Thirty pounds; its a great sum. Ou ay, I mind aboot it noo. It was me that coft our Harry's bits o' plenishing; and, as I had transackit business for yer respeckit faither wi' the same man, he had thocht the articles were for him; and this maks the blunder. But, if you'll gie me the bit account, sir, I'll see to the settlement o't."

"Well, here it is, William," said the young laird; "but you was going to tell us of the good fortune which enabled your son to stock so large a farm as Riddleglen. Pray, go on with your statement."

Mr Winkleton had just begun at a great distance from the knotty point, for the purpose of having time to consider how he was to get over it, when the servant again entered with other two letters. Mr Frederic coloured deeply as he glanced at their contents; and, when he had perused them, he said, in a tone of evident displeasure—

"You may save yourself the trouble of accounting farther for your son's wealth, Mr Winkleton; I have discovered the source of it now."

He walked off without uttering another word, leaving the perplexed factor to ruminate and lament over his altered fortune. James Marybank was soon called to his young master's presence, and dispatched upon some secret message. He was himself seen, shortly afterwards, on the road to Mantleton; and nothing more was heard of either of them till the arrival of a party of sheriff-officers, who arrested Mr Winkleton and his son, and carried them off to jail.

One of the letters which were received by the young laird before leaving the store-room, was an intimation that a bill given by Mr Honeybride for five score of sheep and ten black cattle, bought at Steepleton roup, became payable on the Monday following. These sheep and cattle were all found in the possession of Mr Henry Winkleton. The other letter enclosed an account due by the same gentleman to a wright, in the village of Mantleton, for two new carts, two ploughs, and one pair of harrows, which were also used by the young farmer as his own property.

When the factor's books were examined, it was discovered that he had embezzled the rents, sold wood and grain grown upon the estate, and kept the prices, suppressed an annuity left by Mrs Honeybride to Widow Marybank, and committed many other blunders to enrich himself and impoverish his master. The consequence of these discoveries was his own dismissal from the factorship, and the expulsion of his son from the farm, to which Mr Landel again returned, after suffering many hardships and losses, which the justice and generosity of his young and high-minded laird could not altogether repair. We can only add, that his daughter, Harriet, soon after became the wife of James Marybank, who, in the days of their adversity, had done everything in his power to make himself deserving of her best affections. In adding that this couple were well rewarded by the young laird, and that James afterwards filled the office of factor, we may be thought to be sacrificing, in the usual form, at the shrine of poetical justice. There is indeed now-a-days so little experience of the patronage of Astræa in the ways of the world, that a story-teller, who dispenses happiness to the good, is set down as a poet who draws from the sources of invention. For once, however, we here claim the right of being excepted.



LADY RAE.

WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

LADY RAE.

During the time that Oliver Cromwell was in Edinburgh, a lady called one day at his lodgings and solicited an interview. She was closely wrapped up in a large and loose mantle, and deeply veiled. The former, however, did not conceal a shape of singular elegance, nor mar the light and graceful carriage of the wearer. Both were exceedingly striking; and if the veil performed its duty more effectually than the mantle, by completely hiding the countenance of the future Protector's fair visiter, it was only to incite the imagination to invest that countenance with the utmost beauty of which the "human face divine" is susceptible. Nor would such creation of the fancy have surpassed the truth; for the veiled fair one was, indeed, "beautiful exceedingly."

On its being announced to Cromwell that a lady desired an interview with him, he, in some surprise, demanded who and what she was. The servant could not tell. She had declined to give her name, or to say what was the purpose of her visit.

The Protector thought for a moment; and, as he did so, kept gazing, with a look of abstraction, in the face of his valet. At length—

"Admit her, Porson, admit her!" he said. "The Lord sends his own messengers in his own way; and if we deny them, he will deny us."

Porson, who was one of Cromwell's most pious soldiers—for he served in the double capacity of warrior and valet—stroked his sleek hair down over his solemn brow, and uttered a sonorous "Amen" to the unconnected and unintelligible observation of his master, who, it is well known, dealt much in this extraordinary sort of jargon.

Having uttered his lugubrious Amen, Porson withdrew, and, in a few minutes, returned, conducting the lady, of whom we have spoken, into the presence of Cromwell.

On entering the apartment, the former threw aside her veil, and discovered a countenance of such surpassing beauty as moved the future Protector to throw into his manner an air of unwonted gallantry.

At the lady's first entrance, he was busy writing; and had merely thrown down his pen when she appeared, without intending to carry his courtesy any further; but he had no sooner caught a sight of the fair face of his visiter, than, excited by an involuntary impulse, he rose from his chair, and advanced towards her, smiling and bowing most graciously; the latter, however, being by no means remarkable either for its ease or its elegance.

"Pray, madam," now said Cromwell, still looking the agreeable—so far as his saturnine features would admit of such expression—"to what happy circumstance am I indebted for the honour of this visit?"

"The circumstance, sir, that brings me here, is by no means a happy one," replied the lady, in tones that thrilled even the iron nerves of Oliver Cromwell. "I am Lady Rae, general; the wife of John Lord Rae, at present a prisoner in the Tolbooth of Edinburgh, for his adherence to the cause of the late King."

"Ah, my Lady Rae, I am sorry for you; sorry for you, indeed; but, doubtless, you have found consolation in the same source whence your afflictions have sprung. Truly may I reckon—indeed may I, doubtless—that the Lord, who has seen fit to chastise you, has also comforted you under this dispensation."

"None, Sir General, who seek the aid of the Almighty in a true spirit, ever seek that aid in vain," replied Lady Rae; "and I have been a seeker and have found; nor have I, I trust, been wanting on this occasion, in a due submission to his will."

"Truly, I hope not; indeed do I," replied Cromwell. "Then, what would ye with me, fair lady? What would ye with one so feeble and humble as I am; who am but as a tool, a mean instrument in the hand of the artificer?" and the speaker assumed a look of the deepest humility.

"I dare not utter it! I dare not utter it, general!" exclaimed Lady Rae, now giving way, for the first time, to that emotion which was agitating her whole frame, although she had hitherto endeavoured, and not unsuccessfully, to conceal it. "I dare not utter it," she said, "lest it should bring death to my hopes; yet came I hither for no other purpose."

"Speak, lady, speak," said Cromwell. "What wouldst thou with me?"

Lady Rae flung herself on her knees, and exclaimed, with upraised countenance and streaming eyes—

"Save my husband, general! Restore him to liberty, and to me; and thus, on my knees, shall I daily offer up prayers to heaven for thy safety and prosperity. O refuse me not!—refuse me not! general—as thou, thyself, hopest for mercy from thy God in the hour of retribution!" And she wildly grasped the knees of the republican commander.

Without saying a word, Cromwell gently disengaged himself from the fair suppliant, and, turning his back upon her, stalked to the further end of the apartment, seemingly much agitated.

On gaining the extremity of the room, Cromwell stood for two or three minutes, still keeping his back to Lady Rae, with arms folded, and drooping his head, as if musing deeply. At the expiry of this period he suddenly turned round, and, advancing towards his fair visiter, with quick and hurried step, said—

"My Lady Rae, may the Lord direct me in this matter, and in all others. I have been communing with myself anent your petition; truly have I, but see not that I can serve thee; I cannot indeed. If we would all walk in the straight path, we had need to walk warily; for, in this matter I cannot help thee, seeing my Lord Rae is a State prisoner, and I have no power over him; none, truly, none whatever. The law is strong, and may not be trifled with. But I will consider, fair lady, indeed will I; I will seek direction and counsel in the matter from on high. I will do so this night; I will have this night to think of the matter, and thou wilt call upon me at this hour to-morrow, and I will then see if the Lord will vouchsafe me any light, as to how I may assist thee and thy poor husband; for, on thy account, I would do so if I could."

Confused, and all but wholly unintelligible, as was this address of Cromwell's, Lady Rae perceived that it contained

a gleam of comfort. that a ray of hope-inspiring light, however feeble, played through its obscurity; and, satisfied with this, she urged her suit no further, but, with a thankful acceptance of the Parliamentary general's invitation to her to wait upon him on the following day, she withdrew.

On Lady Rae's issuing from Cromwell lodgings, she stood in the street, gazing around her for an instant, as if looking for some one whom she had expected to find waiting her, but who was not, at the moment, in sight. This was the case; but it was only for a moment that she was so detained. She had glanced but two or three times around her, when she was joined by a personage of very striking appearance. This was a huge Highlander, considerably above six feet in stature, proportionably stout and well made, and, apparently, of enormous strength. He was dressed in the full costume of his country, and armed to the teeth. By his side depended a tremendous claymore; in his belt were stuck a dagger and a brace of pistols; and, on his shoulder, rested that formidable weapon called a Lochaber axe.

The countenance of this tremendous personage was in keeping with his other charms: it was manly, and decidedly handsome, but, withal, was marked with an expression of fierceness that was appalling to look upon; and was thus calculated, when associated with his gigantic figure, to inspire at once admiration and fear.

As this formidable personage approached Lady Rae, he touched his bonnet with an air of the most profound respect, and assumed a look and attitude of devoted attention to her commands.

"I have seen him, John," said Lady Rae, addressing her Goliath of an attendant, who was neither more nor less than a retainer of Lord Rae's, but one who stood high in the estimation of both the former and latter for his fidelity, and, fierce as he looked, for the gentleness of his nature. John M'Kay—for such was his name—was, in short, an especial favourite of both Lord and Lady Rae and was admitted to a degree of confidence and familiarity that elevated him much above his real condition. They were proud too of his superb figure, and delighted to exhibit him in the full dress of his country, as a specimen of the men which it produced—"I have seen him, John," said Lady Rae, whose protector and attendant John always was, when she went forth on occasions of business or importance like the present.

"And what he'll say, my Letty?" inquired John, in a low and gentle tone, and stopping to catch Lady Rae's communication.

"Not much that is quite satisfactory, John. He speaks in a strange style, but I think there is ground of hope. He did not altogether refuse the prayer of my petition, but bade me call upon him again to-morrow."

John looked grave, but made no reply. His lady walked on, and he followed at a respectful distance.

The former now directed her steps to a locality in the city with which she was but too familiar, and which she had had occasion of late but too often to frequent. This was the Tolbooth—the place of her husband's confinement.

On reaching the outer entrance to the jail, the low half door, thickly studded with huge-headed nails, by which it was temporarily secured during the day, was immediately thrown open for her admission by the turnkey—a little crusty-looking personage in a fur cap—who had been leaning over it, listlessly looking around him, on her Ladyship's approach. As the latter entered the prison door, the former stood to one side, doffed his little fur cap, and respectfully wished her Ladyship a good morning.

"How are you to-day, James?" said Lady Rae in kindly tones; "and how is my Lord?"

"Quite well, my Lady, quite well," replied the little turnkey—extremely proud, seemingly, of the condescension of her Ladyship. The latter passed on, and commenced threading her way through the tortuous but well-known passages which led to her husband's prison room. John M'Kay followed his mistress into the jail, previously leaving his arms at the door—a condition to which he had always to submit before gaining admission. Having denuded himself of his weapons, John also passed on, but not before he had shaken his fist ominously in the face of the little jailer. This was John's constant practice, every time he entered the prison; and, simple as the act was, it had a good deal of meaning. It meant, in the first place, that John associated the misfortune of his master's confinement with the little turnkey's employment: That he considered him as aiding and abetting in the same. It further meant, that if it were not for one thing more than another, or, as John himself would have expressed it, "for todder things more nor ones," he would have brought his Lochaber axe and the turnkey's head into more intimate contact.

In the meantime, Lady Rae having ascended several flights of dark and narrow stairs, and traversed several passages of a similar description, had arrived at a particular door, on either side of which stood a grenadier, with shouldered musket, and bayonet fixed. They were the guards placed upon her husband, who occupied the apartment which they sentinelled.

The soldiers, who had orders to admit her Ladyship and attendant to the prisoner, at any time between the hours of nine in the morning and seven at night, offered no hindrance to her approaching the door and rapping for admittance. This, she now did, and the—"who's there?" of the captive, was replied to, in a powerfully Celtic accent, by John M'Kay, with—"My Letty Rae, my Lort." The door instantly flew open, and its inmate came forth, with a smiling and delighted countenance, to receive his beautiful and faithful wife.

In the meantime, John M'Kay took his station on the outside of the door—a more friendly guard over the inmates of the apartment to which it conducted, than those who stood on either side of him. Here the same feeling which had dictated John's significant hint to the turnkey below, suggested his general bearing and particular manner to the two soldiers now beside him.

Maintaining a profound and contemptuous silence, he strutted up and down the passage—without going, however, more than two or three yards either way—in front of the door of his Lordship's apartment, keeping his huge form proudly erect, as he thus paced the short walk to which he had limited himself, and casting, every now and then, a look of fierce defiance on the appalled soldiers, who looked with fear and dread on the chafed lion with whom they found themselves thus unpleasantly caged, and who seemed every moment as if he would spring upon and tear them to pieces; and, in truth, little provocation would it have taken to have brought John M'Kay's huge fists into play about their heads. There can be no doubt, that there was nothing at that moment which would have given John more satisfaction than their affording him an excuse for attacking them. This, however, the soldiers carefully avoided; and, not content with refraining from giving the slightest offence, either in word, look, or deed, endeavoured to conciliate John by an attempt to lead him into friendly conversation. But the attempt was in vain. Their advances were all repelled, either with silent contempt, or with a gruff uncourteous response. A specimen of the conversation which did take place, between M'Kay and the guards, may be given:—

"Delightful day, friend!" said one of the soldiers.

"S'pose it is!" replied John, sternly, and continuing his walk.

A pause.

"Anything new in the town to day?" at length said the other soldier.

"S'pose something new every tay!" replied John, gruffly.

"Ay, ay, I dare say; but have *you* anything new to tell us?"

"Maype I have!" said John with a grim smile.

"What is it?"

"Tat I'll knock your tam thick head against tat wall, if you'll pe botter me wi' any more o' your tam nonsense. Tat's news for you!" and John gave one of those peculiar Celtic grunts, which no combination of letters can express. "And you, you scarecrow-looking rascal," he continued, addressing the other sentinel, "if you'll spoke anoder word, I'll cram my sporran doon your tam troat."

Having delivered himself of these friendly addresses, John resumed his march, with additional pride of step and bearing. In a minute after, he was summoned into Lord Rae's apartment, where he remained until Lady Rae left the prison, which she did in a short time afterwards.

It was with a beating heart and anxious mind that Lady Rae wended her way, on the following day—attended, as usual, by her gigantic serving-man—to the lodgings of Oliver Cromwell. On reaching the house, M'Kay took his station, as on a former occasion, on the outside; while her Ladyship advanced towards the door, within which she speedily disappeared, her admittance having been more prompt on the present visit than the former.

In an instant after, Lady Rae was again in the presence of Oliver Cromwell. As, on the former occasion, he was employed in writing when she entered, and as on that occasion so, also, he threw down his pen, and rose to receive her.

"Anent this matter of yours, my Lady," began Cromwell, abruptly, and without any previous salutation—although he looked all civility and kindness—"I really hardly know what to say; truly do I not; but the Lord directs all, and he will guide us in this thing also."

"I trust so!" interrupted Lady Rae, meekly.

"Yes," resumed the future Protector of England; "for we are but weak creatures, short-sighted and erring. But, indeed, as I told you before, my Lady, your husband is a State prisoner; truly is he, and, therefore, may I not interfere with him. I cannot; I have not the power. Yet would I serve thee if I could; truly would I with great pleasure. But these, you see, are strange times, in which all men must walk warily, for we are beset with enemies, with traitors; deceivers on all sides, men who fear not the Lord. Yet, for this matter of yours, my Lady Rae, I will tell you: I cannot take your husband from prison; it would be unseemly in the sight of all God-fearing men; but, truly, if you could in any ways manage to get his Lordship once without the prison walls, I would take upon me to prevent his being further troubled. He should have a protection under my hand; truly he should, although it might bring me to some odium with my friends. But he should have it, nevertheless, out of my respect for you, my Lady. Now, go, go my Lady; I may say no more on the subject. Go, try and fall on some means of getting thy husband without the walls of his prison; this done, come instantly to me, and thou shalt have a protection for him under my hand; indeed thou shalt."

To Lady Rae, this proposal was a grievous disappointment. It contained an arrangement which she had never contemplated, and which seemed as impracticable as it was strange; yet she saw it was all she had to expect, and that whatever might be the result, she must be content with the extent of interference on her husband's behalf, which was included in the singular measure suggested by Cromwell.

Impressed with this conviction, Lady Rae thanked him for his kindness, said she would endeavour to get her husband without the prison gates by some means or other, and would then again wait upon him for the protection he was so generous as to offer.

"Do so, my Lady, do so," said Cromwell, escorting her Ladyship to the door with an air of great gallantry; "and may the Lord have thee in his holy keeping."

Lady Rae turned round, again thanked the general, courtsied, and withdrew.

On reaching the street, her Ladyship was instantly joined by her faithful attendant, M'Kay, who had been waiting with the greatest anxiety and impatience for her return; for to him his master's life and liberty were dearer far than his own, and he well knew that both were much in the power of the extraordinary man on whom his Lady was now waiting.

On the first glance which he obtained of his mistress's countenance, John saw with a feeling of disappointment that lengthened his own several inches that the interview had not been a stisfactory one. His native sense of politeness, however, and of the deference due to his mistress, prevented him making any inquiries as to what had passed until she should herself choose to communicate with him on the subject. For such communication, however, he had longer to wait than usual; for, lost in thought and depressed with disappointment, Lady Rae walked on a good way without taking any notice whatever of her attendant, who was following at a distance of several yards. At length, she suddenly stopped, but without turning round. This John knew to be the signal for him to advance. He accordingly did so, and, touching his bonnet, waited for the communication which it promised.

"I am afraid, John" now said Lady Rae—"I am afraid we shall be disappointed, after all. The general has made the strangest proposal you ever heard. He says that he cannot, without compromising himself, or to that effect, liberate his Lordship from jail; but that if he were once out—that is, if he could be got out by any means—he would save him from being further troubled, and would grant him a protection under his own hand. But how on earth are we to get him out? It is impossible. These two guards at the door, besides other difficulties, render it altogether impracticable. I know not what is to be done."

It was some seconds before M'Kay made any reply. At length—

"I'll no think ta diffaculty fery crate, after all, my Letty," replied John. "There's shust ta bodachan at ta dore, I could put in my sporran, and ta twa soger."

"Yes, John; the first you might, perhaps, manage," said Lady Rae, smiling, and glancing unconsciously at the huge figure of her attendant, which presented so striking a contrast to that of the little, slim, crusty turnkey; "but the two soldiers—"

"Whoich," exclaimed John, contemptuously; "if's no far prettier men than was there yesterday, it'll no trouble me much to manage them too, my Letty. A wee bit clamshcuchar wi' my Lochaper axe, or a brog wi' my skean dhu, will make them quate aneuch, my Letty. Tat's but a small shob."

"John, John, no violence, no violence!" exclaimed Lady Rae, in great alarm, at the sanguinary view of the process for her husband's liberation which John had taken. "No violence. If his Lordship's liberation be attempted at all, there must be no violence; at least none to the shedding of blood, or to the inflicting the smallest injury on any one. The idea is horrible; and if acted on, would only make matters worse. Your own life, John, would be the forfeit of such an atrocious proceeding."

"Foich, a figs for tat, my Letty, beggin your Lettyship's pardon," replied John, a good deal disappointed at the peaceful tone of his mistress, and at the loss of an opportunity, such as he had long desired, of taking vengeance on his master's guards and jailors.

"Foich, a figs for tat, my Letty, beggin your Lettyship's pardon," he said. "I could teuk to the hills in a moment's notice, and see who'll catch John M'Kay then."

"Well, well, perhaps, John, you might, but you must speak no more of violence; I charge you, speak no more of it. We will, in the meantime, go to his Lordship and submit the matter to him, and be guided, thereafter, by his advice."

Having said this, Lady Rae directed her steps to the jail, and, closely followed by M'Kay, was soon after in the apartment of the prisoner.

Lord Rae having been apprised, by his lady, of the result of her interview with Cromwell, a secret consultation between the two, which lasted nearly an hour, ensued.

During this consultation, many different plans, for effecting the liberation of the prisoner, were suggested, and, after being duly weighed, abandoned as impracticable. One at length, however, was adopted, and this one was proposed by M'Kay; it was characteristic of the man, and came as close in its nature to his original one as he durst presume upon.

This plan, which was a simple enough one, was, to seize the two guards at the outside of the door, and to hold them fast until Lord Rae should have rushed past them, and got out of the prison. The turnkey at the outer door, who, as has been already said, was a little slender man, his Lordship was to seize, and throw down, and then get over the little half door, which was under his guardianship, the best way he could. A row of short, sharp spikes, however, with which it was fenced on its upper edge, rendered this a formidable difficulty; but it was thought that it might, to speak literally, be got over, by the aid of a long form which stood on one side of the passage of the jail, for the accommodation of visiters.

All this trouble a touch of the key would have saved, but this, the little man always carried in his pocket, never allowing it to remain in the lock an instant, however frequent or numerous his visiters might be.

The securing of the two guards at the prisoner's door, by far the most serious part of the business, M'Kay took upon himself, and with a degree of confidence that sufficiently shewed how well he was aware of his own surpassing strength.

This plan of proceedings arranged, it was resolved that it should be put in execution that very afternoon. On that afternoon, accordingly, John M'Kay again appeared at the jail door, demanding admittance to his master. The door was immediately thrown open to him by the little turnkey, whom he now, for the first time, addressed in a friendly tone.

The same change of manner marked his salutation to the guards at the door of his master's apartment. To these he spoke in the most civil and obliging terms possible. The men, who had often winced under his savage growls and fierce looks, wondered at the change, but were glad enough to meet with it, in place of his former ferocity.

John, after talking for a few minutes with the sentinels, went into his Lordship's room. The latter was dressed, and ready for the bold proceeding about to be adopted.

"Think you you can manage them, John?" said his Lordship, in a whisper, after the door had been secured in the inside.

"Pooch, a dizzen o' them, my Lort!" replied M'Kay, in the same under-tone. It's twa bits o' shachlin podies no wors speakin aboot."

"But they are armed, John; they have guns and bayonets, and the former are loaded."

"Pooch, their guns! what'll sicknify their guns, my Lort, when I'll have cot a hold o' the craturs themsels, in my hants?" and he held out his enormous brown paws as if to certify their power. "I'll crush the podies like a mussel shells."

"No violence, John, remember," said Lord Rae, energetically, but smiling as he spoke; "that is, to the extent of doing the men any, the smallest, personal injury. Remember, now, John; do otherwise," continued his Lordship, in a more severe tone, "and you forfeit my favour and esteem for-ever. Mark, John, besides," added his Lordship, who seemed most anxious on the point which he was now pressing on M'Kay's consideration, "your doing any injury to these men would be destruction to me; for, under such circumstances, the general would not grant me a protection after I was out, and my case would, otherwise, be rendered infinitely worse, and more hopeless than it is. Now, remember all this, John, and do the men no personal injury, I charge you."

John's face reddened a little at the earnestness with which these injunctions were delivered; and, probably, he thought they indicated something like degeneracy in his chief; but he promised compliance with his commands; and, to render his obedience more certain, by lessening the temptation to infringe them, he denuded himself of a concealed dirk, which he always carried about him, over and above the arms he openly wore. Of this proceeding, which was voluntary on M'Kay's part, his master highly approved, but, smiling, said—

"You have still your fists, John, nearly as dangerous weapons as that you have just laid aside; but I hope you will use them sparingly."

John smiled, and promised he would.

In a few minutes afterwards, M'Kay came forth from Lord Rae's apartment to perform the daring feat of securing two armed men by the mere force of physical strength; for he was now without weapon of any kind. When he came out, however, it was with an appearance of the most friendly feeling towards the soldiers. He came out smiling graciously, and entered into familiar chat with the men, alledging that he came to put off the time till his master had written a letter, which he was to deliver to a person in town.

Thrown off their guard, by M'Kay's jocular and cordial manner, the soldiers grounded their muskets, and began to enter, in earnest, into the conversation which he was promoting. M'Kay, in the meantime, was watching his opportunity to seize them; but this, as it was necessary he should be placed, with regard to them, so as to have one on either side of him, that he might grasp both at the same instant, he did not obtain for some time.

By dint, however, of some exceedingly cautious and wary manœuvring, M'Kay at length found himself in a position favourable to his meditated proceedings. On doing so, he, with the speed and force of lightning, darted an arm out on either side of him, seized a soldier by the breast with each hand, and with as much ease as a powerful dog could turn over a kitten, laid them both gently on their backs on the floor of the passage, where he held them extended at full length, and immovable in his tremendous grasp, till he felt assured that Lord Rae had cleared the prison. This the latter effected with the most perfect success. The moment M'Kay seized the soldiers—an act of which Lord Rae was apprised by the former's calling out, "Noo, noo, my Lort"—he rushed out, ran along the passage, descended the stair in three or four leaps, came upon the little turnkey unawares, as he was looking over the half-door of the prison entrance—his sole occupation during three-fourths of the day—seized him by the neck of the coat behind—laid him down, as M'Kay had done by the soldiers, at his full length—no great length after all—on the floor—drew the form to the door—placed it over the little turnkey in such a way as to prevent his rising—jumped on it—leapt

into the street at one bound, and instantly disappeared. All this was done in the tenth part of the time that it has been taken to relate it. It was, in truth, the work of but a moment.

On being satisfied that Lord Rae had made his escape. "Noo, lads, ye may got up," said M'Kay, loosening his hold of the men, and starting himself to his feet. "Ta burd's flown; but ye may look after ta cage, and see tat no more o' your canaries got away."

Freed from the powerful grasp which had hitherto pinned them to the floor, the soldiers sprung to their feet, and endeavoured to get hold of their muskets. Seeing this, M'Kay again seized them, and again threw them to the floor; but, on this occasion, it was merely to shew the power he had over them, if they should still have any doubt of it.

"Noo, lads, I'll tell you what it is," said M'Kay, addressing the prostrate soldiers—"if you'll behave yoursels desenly, and no be botherin me wi' ony more o' your tam nonsense, I'll aloo you to make me your prisoner; for I'm not intending to run away; I'll kive myself up to save your hides, and take my shance of ta law for what I'll do. Tat's my mind of it, lads. If you like to acree to it, goot and well; if not, I will knock your two heads togidder, till your prains go into smash."

But too happy to accept of such terms, the soldiers at once assented to them; and on their doing so, were permitted once more to resume their legs, when M'Kay peaceably yielded himself their prisoner. The gigantic Highlander could easily have effected his own escape; but he could not have done so without having recourse to that violence which had been so anxiously deprecated by both his master and mistress. Without inflicting some mortal injury on the soldiers, he could not have prevented them from pursuing him when he had fled; and, probably firing on him as he did so. All this, therefore, had been provided for by the arrangements previously agreed upon by Lord Rae and his retainer. By these it was settled, that he should, on the former's making his escape, peaceably yield himself up to "underlie the law," in a reliance on the friendly disposition of Cromwell towards the fugitive, which, it was not doubted, would be exerted in behalf of his servant. Such proceeding, it was thought too would bring Lord Rae's case sooner to issue; and be, with regard to the law, as it were, throwing a bone in the dog's way to arrest his attention, and interrupt his pursuit of the original, and more important object of his vengeance.

On delivering himself up M'Kay was immediately placed in confinement, and shortly after brought to trial, for aiding and abetting in the escape of a State prisoner. The trial was a very brief one; for the facts were easily established, and sentence was about to be passed on the prisoner, when a stir suddenly arose at the court door. The presiding judge paused. The stir increased. In the next instant it was hushed; and in that instant Cromwell entered the court. On advancing a pace or two within the apartment, he took off his hat, bowed respectfully to the judges, and proceeding onwards, finally ascended the bench and took his seat beside them.

When a man feels himself master, he need be under no great ceremony, neither need he trouble himself much about forms or rules which regulate the conduct of inferiors. Cromwell, on this occasion, got up in a few minutes after he had taken his place, and delivered to the court a long, and, after his usual fashion, obscure and unconnected oration in favour of the prisoner at the bar. The chief ground, however, on which he rested his defence and exculpation of M'Kay, was the fidelity to his master, which the crime with which he was charged implied, and the worse effect to the cause of morality than good to the political interests of the State, which the infliction of any punishment in such case would produce. "If," concluded Cromwell, "fidelity to a master is to be punished as a crime, where shall we look for honest servants."

The reasoning of Cromwell, even had it been less cogent than it was, could not be but convincing to those who knew of and dreaded his power. He was listened to with the most profound attention, and the justness of his arguments and force of his eloquence acknowledged by the acquittal of the prisoner.

As M'Kay rose from his seat at the bar to leave the court, Cromwell eyed him attentively for some seconds, and struck with his prodigious size and fierce aspect, whispered to one of the judges near him:—"May the Lord keep me from the devil's and *that* man's grasp."

We have now only to add, that the protection promised by Cromwell to Lady Rae for her husband was duly made out, and delivered to her. We need not say that it was found to be a perfectly efficient document.

A BITING EVIDENCE.

It has often been remarked that crimes are discovered in strange ways. The instances on record are, indeed, so numerous, that the moralist stands in no need of any assistance from us to enable him to give his lesson to the workers of iniquity. Yet we may aid the good cause to which our efforts have always been directed, by giving an example, perhaps as curious as any that has been recorded, of the singular ways by which the eternal laws of right are often vindicated, though we claim, at the same time, an exemption, in the present instance, from the gravity that is generally reputed to belong to moral teachers.

Those who have lived all their lives in large towns, and who are, consequently, accustomed to rumours of robberies, larcenies, and all sorts of illegal appropriation of property, can form no idea of the dreadful stir which the burglarious entrance of some person or persons unknown, into the premises of William Ritchie, farmer, Searig, created in the adjoining village of Cranstoun. It was tremendous. The honest and simple villagers stood aghast at the appalling relation, and wondered at the enormous wickedness.

The robbery had been committed during the night. It was an outhouse that had been entered, and the articles abstracted were, a quantity of linen, several cheeses, and an entire barrel of excellent salt beef, which the lawful owner thereof, little dreaming of what was to happen, had laid up for winter store; and often had William Ritchie, since he drove the last hoop that secured the head of the said barrel, (for William had coopered it up with his own hands,)— often, we say, had he, since that period, revelled in imagination on the savoury and nutritious feeds of beef and greens which he fondly hoped he had secured. Often had his mental vision dwelt with rapture on the sappy rounds embedded in their vegetable accompaniment smoking deliciously on the board: often had the same peep into futurity presented William Ritchie (for William Ritchie liked a good dinner with great sincerity of affection) with distinct simulations of the carving knife entering the said rounds, and severing therefrom thick, juicy slices of well proportioned fat and lean. Often——But where is the use of enlarging on all the beatific visions which the lost barrel of beef, before it was lost, summoned up before the mind's eye of William Ritchie. Let us rather proceed with our story, leaving it to the reader to mark, with the sympathy which the circumstance demands, the ruin, the utter prostration of all William's hopes, as regarded his salted provender, of which this nefarious robbery was the cause.

It was a good while after the perpetration of the burglary

and theft before the slightest clue could be obtained to the discovery of the perpetrator. One or two, indeed, were suspected, but they were so more on the general ground of their being habit and repute loose fish, than from any particular indications of their guilt in the special case of the robbery of William Ritchie's outhouse.

So long, indeed, was it before any trace of the perpetrator of this offence could be discovered, that people were beginning to abandon all hopes of its ever being made out. It is curious, however, to mark how strangely things sometimes come round.

About two months after the robbery in question, William Ritchie had occasion to call one day on a certain Mr John Johnstone who kept a grocery shop in the village of Cranstoun. It was to order some tea and sugar—Mr Ritchie being a customer of Mr Johnstone's, and one of the best he had.

"Ony word yet, Mr Ritchie," said the shopkeeper, after the first greetings had passed between himself and the former—"ony word yet o' your late visiters?"

Mr Ritchie shook his head, and, with a melancholy smile, replied—

"No, nae word yet; and, I fancy, there never will be noo."

"No quite sure o' that," said Mr Johnstone, with a look of peculiar and somewhat mysterious intelligence. "Was the barrel o' saut beef they took frae ye a gey big ane? As muckle as wad keep a sma' family chowin for sax weeks or sae?"

"I daur say it micht," replied William Ritchie, with a sigh," if they warna a' the greedier on't."

"Just sae," said Mr Johnstone, with the same expression of latent meaning; and, in the next moment—"Will ye step ben the way a minat, Mr Ritchie. I want to speak to ye." And he led the way to a back apartment, followed by his customer.

On reaching this retreat, Mr Johnstone carefully shut the door, and advancing, almost on tiptoe, to Mr Ritchie, said, in a half whisper:—

"I'll tell ye, William, what I was wanting to say to ye. If I'm no greatly mistaen," continued Johnstone—and now adding to the force of the mysterious expression of countenance formerly alluded to, by placing his forefinger significantly on the side of his nose—"If I'm no greatly mistaen, I hae gotten an inklin o' wha it was that broke into your premises."

"No!" exclaimed William Ritchie, with a look of intense interest. "Wha are they?"

"What wad ye think if it were Raggit Rab?"

"That it wasna the least unlikely," replied William Ritchie. "Twa or three hae suspeckit him, and mysel amang the lave; but nae mair could be made o't. Hoo come ye to be sae sure he's the man, John?"

"Isna mustard a fine thing to a bit saut beef?" rejoined John Johnstone, with another of his deep intelligent looks.

"Nae doot o't," said William Ritchie, surprised at the oddness and apparent irrelevancy of the remark. "But what o' that?"

"I'll tell ye what o' that, William," replied Mr Johnstone. "I've noticed that ever since your premises war broken into, Rab has bocht mair mustard frae me than he ever did in the hale course o' his life before. There's no a day noo, but ane o' his weans is here for a pennyworth;" and John Johnstone looked triumphantly at William Ritchie.

The latter said nothing for a few seconds, but at length remarked, that it was a queer aneuch circumstance, and looked geyin suspicious. But added, that it was a new way o' makin out a charge o' robbery."

"It may be sae," replied Johnstone; "but I think it pretty conclusive evidence, for a' that."

"It wad be a funny aneuch circumstance," said William Ritchie, smiling, "to detect a thief through the medium o' mustard. There wad be novelty in't, at ony rate."

"Faith, I'm sae convinced o't, I wad hae ye try't, William," said Mr Johnstone. "Gie ye lang Jamie the messenger the hint, and let him search Rob's hoose incontinently, and, I'll wad a firkin o' butter to a fardin cannle, that ye'll fin something there that Rab Borland 'll no be very weel able to account for."

Notwithstanding the confidence Mr Johnstone evinced in the accuracy of his conjectures regarding the guilt of the personage above-named, William Ritchie could not help thinking, as indeed, he had said, that the mustard formed rather a strange ground of proceeding in a case of criminal dereliction, still, as Robert was a gentleman of very indifferent reputation in that part of the country, and in one or two other places besides, perhaps he thought there could be neither great harm nor risk in adopting the process recommended by his friend, Johnstone.

Being of this opinion, Mr Ritchie immediately proceeded to seek out the legal functionary before alluded to—namely, James Rathbone, or Lang Jamie, as he was more familiarly called; this soubriquet being highly descriptive of the personal conformation of the worthy in question, whose legs were of prodigious length, but not with body corresponding. Indeed, so marked was the discrepancy here—that is, between the length of Jamie's legs and his body—that although he stood six feet three on his stocking soles, he was found too short for admission into a dragoon regiment, to which he, on one occasion, made offer of his services; for, being all legs, he sunk down nearly to his neck on the saddle when mounted on horseback, and thus presented no superstructure worth counting upon. Jamie, in short, so far as appearance went, was merely a pair of animated tongs. But this is something of a digression.

William Ritchie having sought out Lang Jamie, whom he found in the act of writing out some summonses against certain defaulters in Cranstoun, thus cautiously opened the business of his call.

"Ony word yet, Jamie, o' the depredaturs?" Jamie had been previously employed in the matter to which this question referred.

"No; nae scent o' them yet," replied Jamie. "But I'm keepin a sharp look-oot, and houp to hae some o' them by the cuff o' the neck before lang."

"Hae ye nae idea wha they could be, Jamie?" again inquired William Ritchie.

"Maybe I hae, and maybe I haena," replied the former. "It's no safe speakin, ye ken, anent thae things. There's yevidence wanted, Mr Ritchie—strong steeve yevidence; or, at least, weel-grunded suspicion, to allow o' a man openin his mind on thae subjects wi' perfect safety."

"Dootless, dootless," said William Ritchie; "but if there war now onything like fair and reasonable grounds o' suspicion against ony body, wad ye act, Jamie, and proceed thereon as the law directs?"

"Undootedly. I wad nab them at ance," replied Jamie.

"Just sae," said William Ritchie. "Weel then, if a certain person bocht an unusual quantity o' mustard within a certain time, what wad ye infer frae that, Jamie?"

"I wad infer frae that, that he likit it. That's a'," said Jamie.

"But folk dinna usually eat mustard its lane," rejoined William Ritchie; "they maun hae something till't. Noo, what's the maist likely thing that they wad eat it wi' in this, or in ony ither similar case?"

"I dinna ken, I'm sure," said Jamie, musingly. "Maybe a bit saut fish, or something o' that kind."

"What wad ye think o' a bit saut beef?" inquired Ritchie.

"Very guid," said Jamie. "Just an excellent association. Saut beef and mustard;" and he licked his lips, as he thought of the condiment thus accompanied.

"Weel then," continued William Ritchie, "micht ye no infer, think ye, frae this extraordinary consumption o' mustard, that the consumer had a comfortable supply o' saut beef in his larder?"

"The inference, I think, wad be fair aneuch," said Jamie; "at least there wad, certainly, be strong probability o' the fact."

"I think sae," rejoined William. "Then, keepin in mind that I lost a barrel o' saut beef, what wad ye think if Rob Borland sent every day since syne to Johnny Johnstone's shop for a pennyworth o' mustard?"

"I wad think it a gey suspicious lookin thing, surely," replied Jamie; "and wad conclude that Borland and your beef, Mr Ritchie, were on rather owre intimate a footin. It wad, indeed, I confess, be rather a queer sort o' proof to go upon; but feth, there's something in't. Can ye instruct as to the mustard?"

"'Deed can I," said William Ritchie; and he proceeded to inform Jamie of what had passed between him and Johnstone on the subject in discussion; adding, that he had come to him by the advice of the latter, and concluding by requesting Jamie to search the premises of Mr Robert Borland.

Jamie, at first, shyed a little at taking so very decisive a step on such strange grounds; but, at length, agreed to adventure on the proceeding.

On the afternoon of that very day, Jamie, accompanied by two drunken, pimple-faced concurrents, visited the domicil of Mr Robert Borland, and there found, not William Ritchie's beef, but the barrel which had contained it; the last piece of the former having made the family dinner on that very day.

The barrel, however, having been identified, and sworn to by its owner, Mr Borland was consigned to the county jail, and subsequently brought to trial before the circuit court for the robbery.

A young lawyer, who was desirous of fleshing his legal sword for the first time, undertook Mr Borland's defence without fee or reward, and laboured hard to shew that the circumstance of the pannel at the bar's buying a quantity of mustard daily, was no proof whatever that he was living on stolen salt beef, or, indeed, on salt beef at all. "It might have been salted fish. He might have bought it to eat with salt fish, gentlemen of the jury," said this unfledged orator, "or with a hundred other articles of food. Why salt beef more than anything else? I say, that to allege that it was salt beef, gentlemen of the jury, is to presume that to be a fact which is a mere hypothesis—a hypothesis founded on an association of ideas—the association of salt beef with mustard, or *vice versa*. Now, gentlemen of the jury," continued our incipient Cicero, "you will be so good as observe that however natural this association of ideas may be—that is, however, natural it may be to suppose that the pannel at the bar bought the condiment in question to eat with salt beef—the inference is by no means either a necessary or an inevitable one. Very far from it. It is indeed monstrous to insist on its being so. Can a man, I would ask—can a man, I say—not purchase a pennyworth of mustard without being suspected of having stolen salt beef to eat with it? Or, take another view of the case—is a man to be suspected of having stolen salt beef, *because* he buys a pennyworth of mustard? No, gentlemen of the jury, you will never, I am sure, give in to such a monstrous doctrine as this—a doctrine that would destroy at one fell blow the liberty of the subject, and the trade in mustard."

Much more to the same purpose did this promising young lawyer say; but, we regret to add, to no purpose. The jury insisted on sticking by the mustard, as, at least, a presumptive proof of guilt, when corroborated by the circumstances of Mr Borland's "habit and repute" character, and the empty barrel's having been found on his premises. The result of this view of the case was a verdict of guilty; and the consequence of that verdict, sentence of transportation for fourteen years.

Such was the doom awarded against the ingenious Mr Borland; and, we daresay, the reader will allow that seldom has crime owed its detection to so curious a circumstance.

THE PROFLIGATE.

On the estate of Mr Dreghorn of Longtrees, in the west country, there lived, some twenty years ago, a farmer of the name of Blair. The portion of Mr Dreghorn's estate, however, which James Blair rented, was but a small one; for, although a man of great respectability and integrity of character, he was poor, and had much difficulty in keeping himself square with the world. This, however, by dint of rigid economy and ceaseless toil, he effected.

The family of James Blair consisted of his wife, a son named after himself, and a daughter who was called Elizabeth.

The younger Blair, who was, at the period of our story, about twenty years of age, was a lad of excellent character and amiable dispositions. He was, withal, a remarkably handsome young man, and was thus a general favourite in that part of the country where he resided.

Elizabeth, again, was the counterpart of her brother, in both disposition and personal appearance, making allowance, as regarded the latter, for the difference of sex. She was, in truth, a lovely girl; and of many a sad heart and sleepless night was she the unconscious cause amongst the young men of the district in which she lived.

James Blair's home, therefore, though a humble, was a happy one. He doated on his children; and they, in return, loved him with the most devoted tenderness and affection.

Up to this period, nothing had occurred to disturb, for a moment, the peace and quiet of this happy family. But, undeserved as it may appear, their hour of trouble was approaching; it was at hand.

Mr Dreghorn, the proprietor of James Blair's farm, had a son, an only one we believe, named Henry, at this time about four-and-twenty years of age. He was a remarkably fine-looking young man, and of engaging manners, but, in reality, a heartless debauchee; one whom no moral restraints could bind; and whom no considerations, however strongly they might appeal to the sense of honour, could induce to forego the gratification of his selfish and vicious passions.

Such was Henry Dreghorn, and such was the man who was destined to carry misery and wretchedness into the once happy home of James Blair.

Young Dreghorn saw, and (we cannot say loved, for he was too great a sensualist to entertain so pure and holy a passion) coveted the fair form of Eliza Blair.

On this part of our story, however, we need not dwell. Suffice it to say that the arch deceiver plied his most winning wiles, and plied them successfully; he triumphed, and his victim fell.

On the disgrace of the poor confiding girl becoming known to her family, dreadful was its effect. Her mother shrieked out, in the agony of her soul, and refused to be comforted. Her father, with more strength of mind, suppressed his grief; but he too shed the secret tear, and beat his forehead in the wildness of his despair, as he brooded over the ruin of his hopes—the ruin of his child.

But it was on her brother that the blow, perhaps, fell, after all, with the most withering effect. With a less

matured judgment, and with less experience of the world than his elders, his feelings were more poignant, and less under the control of reason. To him all appeared dark and dismal, without one glimmering of light to relieve the dreary waste of his thoughts. To his unfortunate sister herself he said nothing—not one upbraiding word escaped his lips; but his silence was the silence of deep despondency—of a mind oppressed and borne down by an overwhelming, although uncomplaining sorrow.

Young Blair's first impulse, on learning the misfortune of his sister, was to seek out her destroyer, and to take him to account for the dastardly deed; and for this purpose he actually watched him, cautiously and determinedly, with a loaded pistol. But Dreghorn was not to be found; he had left the country; he had gone to London; and had thus, for a time, at any rate, escaped the vengeance of the justly-incensed, but rash and ill-judging young man. Thus baulked of his victim, young Blair resumed his usual employment; but it was only for a short space. The disgrace of his sister so preyed on his mind, that he could not attend to his duties as he formerly did; neither would he go abroad as he had been wont, but naturally, though erroneously, believing that he also would be considered as sharing the infamy of his unhappy relative, avoided all his usual places of resort, and all the companions of his happier hours.

This, however, was a state of things that could not long continue; neither did it; young Blair, unable longer to struggle against the withering feelings which his continued residence on the scene of his own and his family's disgrace was constantly calling into existence, suddenly disappeared, without informing even his parents of his intention, or giving them any idea of what he intended doing. A letter, however, which they received a short time after his departure, solved the mystery. It informed them that he had enlisted; and gave them, at the same time, the reason for his taking so extraordinary a step; yet, although this reason, as will readily be guessed, bore reference to, and weighed heavily on, the conduct of his unfortunate sister, he concluded by begging for that sister, at the hands of his parents, their forgiveness, and the kindest attentions which their own benevolence could suggest, and her unhappy situation could demand.

Like much greater events, however, the misfortune of the Blair family was only a nine days' wonder. For somewhere about that time, it was the talk of the country; but it gradually sank into oblivion, and was soon all but forgotten. The subsequent disappearance of young Blair, also, created a sensation for a time; but that too passed away, and merged into the general mass of things heaped up by revolving years. These, to the number of six or seven, had now sped on their course; and, when they had done so, they found James Blair, with his regiment, in Spain, fighting the battles of that unhappy country, and of all Europe, if we but except France, under the Duke of Wellington.

The regiment to which Blair belonged had suffered severely in these sanguinary conflicts; and he himself had been twice wounded, though not so seriously as to drive him from the field, where he had acquired the reputation of a brave and intrepid soldier. The losses which Blair's regiment sustained falling particularly heavy on the officers, they were replaced, from time to time, by young aspirants for military fame from England, who sought out and were then joining their regiments, at every resting-point in the route of the army—coming, fresh and untrained, from the bosom of civil society, and the luxuries of home, to share in the dangers and privations of a soldier's life.

Of such was a gentleman, dressed in a blue surtout, with fur neck, and followed by two sumpter-mules loaded with his baggage, who rode up to a piquet, or outguard, of the —th regiment—the regiment to which Blair belonged—on the day preceding the Battle of Vittoria, and inquired for the head-quarters of the corps. James Blair was one of the party to whom the stranger addressed himself; and there was good reason for the agitation into which the sight of that person threw the astonished soldier. In that person he recognised, although the latter knew not him, the seducer of his sister, Henry Dreghorn. He had purchased a commission in the army, and was now come out to join the regiment to which he had been appointed—the same, by a curious coincidence, in which the brother of his victim served. On seeing him, Blair became as pale as death, and felt himself suddenly under the influence of a violent but indefinable feeling of excitation, which he made a desperate effort to conceal from his comrades, least it might lead to the discovery of the disgrace of his unfortunate sister—a discovery which he dreaded infinitely more than the front of the enemy.

Blair's first impulse, on this occasion, was to rush on his sister's seducer, and to transfix him to the spot with his bayonet; but, for the same reason that induced him to conceal his feelings from his comrades—namely, the dread of bringing to light the story of her frailty—he forbore, but it was with a secret compact with himself, that the hour of vengeance was only delayed, not passed away. In the meantime, Lieutenant Dreghorn—for such was the rank he held—having obtained the information he desired, pursued his way, and was soon at the destination he sought.

We have already alluded to the singularity of the circumstance of Dreghorn's being appointed to the same regiment in which Blair served, but it will appear yet more striking, when we mention that he was appointed not only to the same regiment, but to the same company to which the brother of the victim of his unhallowed passions belonged. This was the case; and it was a circumstance well calculated to forward that stern and perhaps too severe retribution which was about to be meted out to the heartless seducer.

The morning following the occurrence of the incident just related saw the contending armies of Britain and France drawn up in hostile array on the memorable field of Vittoria. The bugle sounded its ominous strains; the drum pealed its notes of alarm; and the armed hosts closed in deadly strife, shrouded in a canopy of dense and sulphurous smoke. The —th regiment was amongst the first engaged. It was thrown, for a moment, into some confusion by the impetuous charge of a column of the enemy. During this moment, the combat assumed the character of a *melée*. The men were detached, and fighting single-handed, officers and privates mingled together. At one instant, during the struggle, Lieutenant Dreghorn stood alone, isolated from his companions in arms. In that instant, a bullet passed through his head, and stretched him lifeless on the field. That bullet was from the musket of James Blair. He saw the opportunity, found it irresistable, levelled his piece, fired, and the seducer of his sister fell. The Battle of Vittoria was fought and won, but James Blair was not amongst the living victors. He perished in the conflict, probably not against his own wishes, and a comrade, who saw the direction of his aim, told the story after the war.

WILSON'S

Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative

TALES OF THE BORDERS,

AND OF SCOTLAND.

THE WARNING.

Among the inhabitants of Blackenburn, which was once the scene of some incidents in the following story, Nanny Ferly was perhaps the most extraordinary. If man, woman, or child, had caught a cold of a week's standing, she never failed to discover a strong similarity between their case and the case of some one else who had died of consumption. Whether the complaint were toothach, or headach, or heartach, she seemed always certain that the symptoms were fatal; though sometimes she rather left people to infer the truth from certain significant hints which she gave them, than told it plain out. Upon these occasions she would shake her head, turn up her eyes, groan audibly, and say—"Ay, ay! a fever often begins that way; and I've kenn'd mony a ane carried to their end by a sma' beginning." She believed as firmly in the existence of ghosts, wraiths, warnings before death, and, in short, all sorts of supernatural agency, as she believed in the truth of her Bible; and in these, along with her talk of "illnesses," "deaths," and "burials," (births and baptisms were not among her favourite subjects,) she found the means of satisfying the craving of a morbid appetite for excitement, which she possessed in an eminent degree.

In the house which stood next to Nanny's, lived Nelly Jackson, who was rather a shrewd thinking woman, and, in some respects, the very antithesis of the former. She had brought her husband four children, most of whom were grown up. They had, however, upon several occasions, been seriously indisposed; but their mother, who already knew Nanny's propensity for peopling the other world, and who, with a creditable degree of penetration, guessed the effect which the ominous shake of her head, and her usual "ay, ay," were likely to have upon the mind of a distressed person, carefully prevented her from getting to their presence while they were ill; and though Nanny did not fail to foretell their fate, in her usual significant way, among her other neighbours, by some mistake they all recovered. Nanny accounted herself not only neglected but insulted, by not being allowed to exercise her benevolence in visiting the sick at all seasons: Nelly, on the other hand, having seen her predictions falsified in the case of her own children, began to doubt that neither her foresight nor her piety were superior to those of others; she even ventured to speak rather slightingly of both, affirming that "nothing gave Nanny greater pleasure than to see her neighbours dying." Which speeches were borne to the ears of Nanny; and thus, though they neither came to fisty-cuffs nor high words, there was little love between them.

Next to Nelly, on the other side, lived Margaret M'Kenzie, her husband, and a daughter whose name was Mary. Margaret was an honest, industrious, and, in most respects, a sensible woman; but, from the circumstance of having been accustomed to listen to it for a length of time, her neighbour Nanny's belief in the preternatural had acquired a considerable ascendency in her mind, and often influenced her thoughts; so that she might be regarded as a sort of medium between the two characters already described. She had born to her husband a son and a daughter; the former of whom had learned a trade and left them; but Mary, who when young was rather a delicate girl, had always been kept at home. To accommodate and keep her as comfortable as possible, a small apartment, with a chimney and a back window, had been fitted up in the *ben end* of the house; and, in this little sanctum, besides assisting her mother with the household concerns, she had earned her own subsistence with her needle for several years. Her constitution of late, however, had greatly improved; and at nineteen—the time at which our story commences—she was a healthy, handsome, and, upon the whole, rather a good-looking young woman.

From the days of their childhood, a close intimacy had subsisted between her and Jenny Jackson, who had been her playmate and confident from the earliest period of her recollection. But somewhat more than a year previous to the time here referred to, Jenny had arrived at that age when it is common for parents in a certain station to send their daughters to "service out amang the farmers round," as Burns has phrased it, that they "may learn something of the world." This, at least, is almost always assigned as a general reason for such a step, and almost as often taken for granted. There are, however, several adjuncts, which nobody ever thinks of mentioning, and sundry little motives of a private or personal nature, which are not without their influence in determining both the parents and the girls themselves upon the propriety of going abroad. In the first place, when a young woman comes to be married—and most of them have a sort of presentiment that, at one time or other, they will have the *misfortune* to be so—she is always expected to provide, or bring along with her, a certain share of the furnishing of a house. Her share having been fixed by a sort of conventional laws, there is no escaping from it: at least there can be but little prospect of an honourable settlement in life without it—the other sex having, in general, enough to do with their own part of the concern, and being by no means more disinterested than the "true love" ballad-makers have represented them. To enable her to make this provision, the parents of a portionless lass can seldom do more than lend her some little assistance in the way of advice and management, leaving her to procure the wherewithal, or, in other words, the money with which the furnishing of houses, and everything else, must be purchased by her own industry. Thus left, service, in the country, and some regular occupation, such as the art of weaving in the towns, are the only alternatives; and to one or other of these she must early devote her attention, if she intends to be in the field of matrimony within a reasonable time.

To those who are acquainted with the tactics of the tender passion, it is, moreover, known that a bashful lover seldom cares for seeking the society of his fair one in the presence of her parents, while the fair one herself as seldom cares for being seen in the society of a lover by these relations. In such matters, a great deal of deceit, or, to speak more properly, of concealment, must be practised. There is a luxury in keeping all those delightful feelings, hopes, fears, fancies, and follies to one's self; more than

half the excitement of the thing, and consequently more than half its pleasure, would be destroyed if the secret were too soon devulged; and for some such reason, perhaps, your enamoured swain fears the eye of a mother, as being an interested party, and likely to be quick-sighted, more than that of any other human being. Whatever be the cause, the effect which it produces seems to be tolerably well understood by a very great majority of marriageable young women; and out of pity, as it would appear, for the failings of the other sex in general, and those of bashful young men in particular, they are sometimes willing to afford wooers an opportunity of seeing them in a less embarrassing situation.

Influenced by one or other, or both or neither of these reasons, motives, or whatever the reader chooses to call them, Jenny Jackson, with her mother's consent, engaged herself as a servant, at a place called Heatherinch; and after having been nearly three quarters of a year in her place, she represented the advantages of "going to service" in so favourable a light, that her young friend, Mary M'Kenzie, felt inclined to listen to any proposal which might give her a chance of similar advantages. Such a proposal was not long awanting; for it appeared that Jenny really had a situation in her eye, and that her previous discourse had been intended to prepare her friend for accepting it. Shortly thereafter, Mary was accordingly engaged to go at the ensuing Martinmas in the capacity of a servant girl, to Cairnybraes, which was a farm lying at the distance of only a mile or so from Heatherinch; and she promised herself a whole world of satisfaction in being again so near her friend.

Here the reader will, no doubt, be inclined to think that Jenny was perfectly disinterested in these matters, and that she could have no motive for doing as she had done, except a wish to promote Mary's happiness. But, alas! how much of disinterestedness, charity, benevolence, and even piety itself, would disappear, if we could only apply the science of chemistry to the heart! Neither acids nor alkalis, however, can be brought to act upon it; and, as for the crucible, the copple, and the fusing pot, they are out of the question, so that a chemical analysis is not to be expected; and, in the absence of such tests, we can only judge of causes from effects; or, in other words, we must judge of the heart from actions and appearances. Be it known then, that within the first half-year of Jenny's service, two young men, who were also servants on the farm, had taken it into their heads to manifest rather more than an ordinary attachment to her. This she told not; but people do not expect to be told of such matters, and, in the present instance, they ascertained, or rather guessed the truth, without any evidence from her. Their names were Andrew Angus and James Duff. Like herself they were both engaged to remain for another year; and though Jenny might have managed their attentions and their addresses without much trouble, had they been only lodged at a tolerable distance, she found it rather distressing to have them constantly so near her. In this emergency, it occurred to her that it were better to have one of them "taken off her hand;" for the performance of this feat, her friend, Mary M'Kenzie, was the most likely individual she could think of; and for Mary's future lover Andrew was set apart.

At the appointed time, Mary came to reside at Cairnybraes; but, as seeds cannot vegetate unless they are put into the ground, so neither can young people acquire an affection for each other unless they are brought together. Jenny could not muster courage enough to tell Andrew to "go and see Mary;" she did not like to bid Mary "come and see him;" and, therefore, she had recourse to manœuvring. The host of the Gazling Inn, on considering the case of his humble brethren, and the few opportunities they had of enjoying themselves, had agreed to give a New Year's entertainment to as many of them as could afford to pay half-a-crown. According to the advertisement on this occasion put forth, the said brethren, for their half-crowns, were to have the privilege of bringing an equal number of *sistren* along with them. It was farther stipulated, that they should have a sufficiency of tea, sugar, bread and butter, set before them, or rather dealt out to them; a man with a fiddle and a fiddle-stick was also to be provided for those who might be inclined to dance; after which, all and sundry were to have as much liquor as they should choose to drink and *pay for*. Such an opportunity was, by no means, to be neglected, and the only matter of importance which Jenny had now to decide upon, was how she might procure a partner for Mary, with whom *she* was not likely to fall in love. Andrew must be managed cautiously, lest he should become restive, and more stubbornly attached to herself than he had been before. He had no previous acquaintance of Mary, and it were both awkward and indelicate, she argued, to send him off to seek a woman to whom he had not so much as spoken on any former occasion. She, moreover, did not like the idea of *dismissing* him, which would have been implied in such a proceeding. She, therefore, deemed it best to bring the *candle to the moth*, as if by accident, and allow him to flutter around it till he was fairly singed. For this purpose, a neighbouring rustic, called Ritchie Dryeraig, was selected as one who was likely to perform his part, and, at the same time, leave Mary's heart free to be impressed with the image of another. By a slight exercise of maiden ingenuity, a little coaxing, and some sly hints, Ritchie was induced to set forth on his mission. The expected evening came—the various parties made their appearance—and so far all was right.

Burns has told us, that

> "The best laid schemes of mice and men
> Gang aft agley;"

and fortunate it were for the world if mice and men were the only portions of society to whose schemes accident might give a wrong direction; but, alas, there is no perfection on this earth, and the schemes of women miscarry almost as often as those of their neighbours! Contrary to all reasonable expectation, and to everything like rational conduct, Andrew took no notice of Mary, while James Duff seemed to regard her with considerable attention, and "poor druckin Ritchie" appeared to be perfectly bewitched by her presence. With respect to Mary herself, it was easy to see that she was rather pleased than otherwise with those indirect attentions and little notices which, in the course of the evening, she received from the said James Duff; and, notwitstanding his previous attachment to Jenny, it almost appeared that he would have volunteered his service to conduct her home. But vain was every attempt of the kind. Even if the maiden had been willing to accept of such service, from Ritchie there was no possibility of escaping. Mary had little skill in these matters; she could not manage them after the manner of well-bred damsels, and her only alternative was to allow him to carry her off.

At first Ritchie was "a' crack thegither;" but scarcely had they got beyond the precincts of the Gazling Inn, when the conversation began to flag, and, after a considerable silence, which his companion had in vain endeavoured to break:—

"Mary," said he, prefacing his discourse with sundry hiccups, "I've fa-a'n in love wi' ye."

"Fa' out o't as fast as possible, then," said Mary, attempting to laugh, though she really began to feel alarmed.

"O Mary, Mary!" again began the maudlin young man most pathetically to plead. "O Mary, if ye only kenned what a heart I have, an' how often I've lookit at you

when I never spake a word, ye wad never bid me do that."

"Lookit at *me*," rejoined the other, affecting to be greatly surprised; "and pray what may the price of a *look* be? If looks are to be made debts, I doubt my little property, which consists only of the claes on my back, will soon fail, and I must become a bankrupt."

"Ah, Mary," persevered her undaunted wooer, "ye ken brawly what I mean; but you surely never kenned what it was to be in love, or ye wad never jeer a body that way."

"Love, they say, is warm," replied Mary, "and I would rather be *in it*, or in my master's kitchen, or in my bed, or anywhere else than *out* in this cauld night; so if you do not walk faster, I shall be forced to run away and leave you."

"My dear Mary," said he of the Dryeraig, mending his pace a little, though it was evident he did so with great reluctance; "my dear Mary, I could gang at the gallop, or I could gang like a snail, or I could gang owre a linn and drown mysel, or owre a craig and break my neck, or speak, or haud my tongue, or do ony other thing on earth for your sake, if ye would only allow me to love ye, and say ye loved me again."

'Weel, I must confess you would do a great deal for me," said Mary, beginning to enjoy his extravagance—teasing as he had become—and scarcely able to refrain from laughing at him; "you would really do a great deal; but take my advice for the present: keep your head above water, and your neck hale as lang as you can; neither gang owre the linn nor the craig, but the neist time you are in a company, let fewer linns gang owre your *ain* craig; and, in the meantime, neither speak of love, nor haud your tongue a'thegither, but *gang at the gallop*!—that will please me best; for my mistress must be angry at me for staying out so late. Or, stop! I might run a race with you for a penny—the loser to pay the stake—and then, I can tell you some other time, whether you are to love me or not. Maidens, they say, should aye be mealy-mouthed at first."

As she uttered these words, she secretly determined, if possible, never to give him another opportunity of making such a proposition. She also resolved to bear with him for the present, and leave him to learn her real sentiments from her future conduct. A crisis, however, was approaching which she had not forseen, and for which she was wholly unprepared. Her protector, who had drank rather too liberally at the Gazling Inn, was now beginning to be in such a state that he would have almost required a protector himself. The moment he heard Mary's light-hearted declaration, his emotion seemed to overcome him, he made a dead stand, and exclaimed in the most piteous accents—

"I canna gang anither fit!"

"Foul fa' you and your feet baith," said Mary, forgetting the resolution which she had formed only a minute ago, and nearly losing her good humour at the same time—"I tell ye," she continued, "that I should been hame lang syne, and d'ye think that I can bide here the hale night to hear you haver nonsense."

"O Mary, Mary!" rejoined the man of exclamations, "this sets the crown on a' my misfortunes, and I'll never do mair gude. Twice ower this same night I saw you looking at Jamie Duff: ye love him, and no me. O Mary, Mary, Mary!" and therewith he threw himself down upon the earth, or rather in a puddle of dirty water by the road-side at full length, and began to weep and groan in great tribulation. When his inarticulate wailings would permit, he again muttered half sentences, about walking over the linn or the craig, and he even threw out hints of an intention to leave the world in that most ungentlemanly manner in which the law sometimes disposes of very dissolute characters. As the liquor with which he had been drenching his system, had no doubt heightened the effects of his sensibility, his sensibility now heightened the effects of the liquor, and between them he was soon in a sad state of mental as well as bodily distemperature.

Mary, who had little experience in these matters, would have readily given all the worlds which all the Alexanders and Cæsars on earth ever conquered, had she been mistress of them, for some one to assist her in conducting him to any house where he might find shelter for the night, or perhaps, as she thought, a bed on which he might breathe his last. Fortunately for her, she soon heard the noise of footsteps approaching; and, in a few minutes more, she had the satisfaction of seeing, or rather hearing James Duff, with his convoy, which was not a merchantman, but a marriageable woman, bear down upon her.

James had been left in quiet possession of Jenny Jackson, in consequence of Andrew—who was certainly the most enamoured lover—having got rather fuddled; from which circumstances he had been left at the inn to sleep off his debauch; and, though the hands of the former were already full, he did not appear offended, nor even greatly distressed at the accident, which gave him an opportunity of again meeting Mary. He immediately lifted the fallen man from the ground on which he was still lying in a half-senseless state, and, with the assistance of the two maidens, who, in this instance, lent their aid, "nothing loth," conducted him to the nearest house, where they left him to recover from his drench.

Mary was now for running home as fast as possible, but the gallantry of her new acquaintance would not permit him to think of allowing her to go alone; he, therefore, proposed, that she should go with them to Heatherinch, which was but a short way out of her road, and, after seeing Jenny safely lodged, he would accompany her at least a part of her journey. To this proposal, Jenny was far from giving a hearty sanction, but the other seemed determined for once to take his own way. She had her own reasons for wishing not to thwart him openly, and, after some trifling demurs, she acquiesced. James, accordingly, escorted Mary as far as her master's barn-yard, which was certainly the most considerable part of her journey; and here, notwithstanding the lateness, or rather earliness of the hour, and her previous hurry to get home, they spent they knew not how long on the leeward side of a *strae stack*, conversing on various subjects which to them, and to the whole world, might have been deemed of very little importance; and, though neither of them spoke one word of love, or made the slightest allusion to that interesting subject, it was almost morning before they thought of separating.

The night adventure thus happily got over, produced no bad consequences; but it was not long before Mary was again threatened with the addresses of Ritchie Dryeraig. To these however, she had sagely determined not to listen if she could by any possibility do otherwise; and when, according to the established rules of society, he presented himself at her bedroom window, between the hours of ten and twelve, P.M., making his presence known by a gentle rap upon the glass and a low whistle, she was under the necessity of feigning sickness oftener than once to get quit of him. But this, as it afforded her an excuse for not seeing him, so it gave him a pretext for returning to inquire after her health; and to avoid him, in a short time, it would have become absolutely necessary for her to lie constantly in bed. This would not do, and a new expedient was tried. Next time he made his appearance, the new moon gave a faint and uncertain light, which seemed to suit her purpose very well; and from the half-opened window she whispered in his ear a terrifying tale of a ghost, which had been lately seen walking under the shelter of a hedge immediately in front of the house. She pointed out the

very bush from which it had emerged; and just as she concluded, the obedient ghost made its appearance, wrapped up in as much white drapery as the wardrobe of any ordinary ghost could be supposed to contain. But the terrified lover, instead of taking to his heels, as the damsel had expected, thrust his head and shoulders in at the window, which she had raised a little for the purpose of speaking to him; and the next moment he stood bolt upright in the room beside her. This was mending matters with a vengeance. The very plan which she had adopted to drive him from the *outside* of the house, had driven him to the *inside* of it; and, what was worse, she was left with him alone. From the odour of his breath, it was evident that he did not lack inspiration; and finding himself snugly housed with the "maid of his heart" beside him, notwithstanding the terrors of the ghost, he was beginning to talk of love; and had it not been for the other servant girl who came in shortly after, it is probable he might have reached the "linns" and the "craigs," as he had done on a former occasion, before he had thought of stopping. She, however, assured him that she had heard her master stirring above stairs—which, by the by, is always a formidable announcement to an enamoured swain—and warned him to make what haste he could in getting home. But this information, though it increased his perplexity to an unmeasurable extent, and effectually silenced him upon the former subject, gave him neither strength nor courage to face an inhabitant of the other world alone, and at the ominous hour of midnight. Judging that it were better to fight within walls than without them, whether the enemies were spiritual or temporal, he continued to keep his position; nor was it till the other servant girl had persuaded one of the young men who slept in the house, and who was supposed to set some value on her own good opinion, to leave his bed and promise to conduct Ritchie beyond the haunted neighbourhood, that he could be prevailed upon to depart.

The hiring time at last came round; the whole of the servants on Cairnybraes were engaged for another year, and Mary's master and mistress were anxious that she should remain also. They had every reason to be satisfied with her integrity, industry, and general good conduct; and when she did not readily accept of their terms, they even went so far as to offer her a slight advance of wages, but to no purpose. Application was next made to her father and mother, in the expectation that they might succeed in persuading her to remain where she was. They readily consented to use their influence, never dreaming that she would reject any request which they might profer; but, for the first time in their lives, they had the mortification of seeing their wishes disregarded. For no persuasion, and upon no condition, could she be prevailed on to engage for another year; and, what was still more strange, she would assign no reason for leaving her place. Her unaccountable humour, in this respect, gave rise to a number of conjectures as to its cause, of which one or two may be noticed in passing.

Some people said that the ghost had scared her as well as Ritchie Drycraig; others supposed that she must have a "lad" about the bleachfield, who found it inconvenient to come so far to see her; but the most general opinion was, that she wished to bring either the foresaid Ritchie, or James Duff, both of whom were regarded as a sort of *danglers*, or distant admirers, to an explanation. Here be it remarked, that this is a subject upon which young women, in general, can only endure silence, with any degree of patience, for a limited time. Some, as a matter of course, will hold out for a longer and some for a shorter season, just as their natural temper may chance to be ardent or otherwise. But, assuredly, the patience of the most plodding maiden on earth, if her heart should happen to be infected with the tender passion, will come to an end; and then, neither man, woman, young, old, or middle-aged, can tell what measures she may adopt, or what agency she may employ to bring forth the important secret. Some novelist or other has said—in spleen it would almost appear—"that in the higher circles there is a regular system of managing these matters—that the whole has been reduced to a science; and that an initiated damsel understands how to play her part in the important concern of getting a husband nearly as well as she understands a game at cards!" This, if true, must be an immense acquisition to young ladies; but, as the "Schoolmaster" has not yet been so far "abroad" as to bring the discovery down to the country girl and the village maiden, these are wholly left to their own shifts—and shifts, at times, they must try. But, as to these, the present writer would be almost wholly ignorant, were it not for certain of the sex themselves, whom he has heard declare that a quarrel about something or nothing is one of their most natural expedients, and, as such, is frequently resorted to with good effect. Next in order, according to the above-mentioned authorities, is a *flitting* or separation, which is to last for a length of time: such a step seems to throw the parties concerned at once upon their beam ends; and before they can trim their ballast again, the secret may chance to "spunk out." Thus there was, at least, a show of reason in some of the conjectures just alluded to. But after having noticed these things, that the reader may judge of their probabilities and improbabilities for himself, to keep up the dignity and the veracity of history he must now be told the truth.

By this time, Mary was completely tired of these tricks and shifts by which she had endeavoured to evade the persevering *Ritchie*, who, whenever his *Dry-craig* was moistened with the *water of life*, or any other strong water, was certain to pester her with his visits and importunities. She also considered it highly dishonourable in herself to encourage any feelings in James Duff which might have a tendency to seduce him from his allegiance to another; and, to be free from these annoyances and temptations with which she knew not how to contend, she honourably and resolutely determined to return home.

At the Martinmas term Mary accordingly took up her abode again with her parents at Bleachinburn. The day on which she returned was wet and stormy, and she caught a cold, which kept her rather indisposed for three weeks. The most fearful in such cases, however, could have seen no reason for apprehending the slightest danger till Sabbath morning ushered in the fourth week. But, on this particular morning, though Mary felt much better, her mother appeared uncommonly thoughtful or rather seriously alarmed. From her husband and daughter, however, she endeavoured to conceal her perturbation as much as possible, and as soon as her neighbour's door was opened, she went to inquire for Mrs Jackson.

"How are ye this morning?" said she, as she entered.

"No that ill!" was the reply. "How are ye yoursel?"

"I may be thankfu I've nae reason to complain!" said the other, in a tone which was in itself a complaint.

"Dear me, Margate," rejoined Nelly, "what's wrang? I have not seen ye look so ill for many a day as ye do this precious morning. Something is distressing ye, I doubt."

"May the Lord have mercy upon me and mine!" ejaculated Margaret, wiping away a tear as she spoke; "but saving His holy will, I fear I have *owre* guid reason to be distressed."

"Sorry am I to hear that!" responded Nelly, catching almost unintentionally the low impressive tone of her neighbour. "But what is't woman? if I may speer."

This was exactly what Margaret wanted, to enable her to

unburden her mind, and she now proceeded to tell the cause of her distress. Some time about midnight, or it might be toward morning, she could not be certain which, she had been awakened from her sleep, by what she described as "a sharp rap upon the window, followed by a lang laigh sough, like the wind whistling in a toom house." She rose stealthily from her bed, to ascertain, if possible, the cause of these unwonted noises, and, while she stood irresolute in the middle of the floor, she heard a low, husky, indistinct voice, which, she said, "resembled that of a dying man," pronounce the word *Mary*. "At hearing that voice," she continued, "every hair on my head stood on end, and my very flesh shook as if it would have fa'n from my banes; but a mither's affection for her ain bairn, and my anxiety anent Mary's distress, made me desperate; and, to be satisfied whether it was onything earthly which had uttered that word, I opened the door, and there I saw her wraith standing at the window as clear as ever I saw hersel!—O sirs!—O sirs! That sight gars my flesh a' creep whenever I think on't! It was a' dressed in white except the head, and that was as black as our Mary's, and it's black enough ye ken. It was just about her size too, as nearly as I could guess; but as soon as it saw me it glided round by the end of the house, without moving foot or hand, and was out of sight in an instant. And now, let a' the doctors, and a' the neighbours on earth say what they will, I believe that my Mary, poor thing, is fa'en into a decline, and that this was naething but a *warning*!—Wo's me!—wo's me!"

"Hout, woman!" said Nelly, who had listened to this mournful recapitulation, not without some indications of doubt as to its authenticity—"Hout, woman, yesterday was *pay day*, as they ca't, among the bleachers, and I'll warrant the wraith was juist some skemp frae the bleachfield wha had gotten himself half-fou, and wanted to get a while's daffin wi' the lassie, Sabbath morning though it was."

"O Nelly, Nelly!" rejoined the other, "I wonder to hear ye speak at that rate, after what happened in Nanny Ferly's last summer!" Finding that she was not likely to meet with much sympathy here, Margaret left the house rather abruptly. But her mind was in a state of perturbation which forbade her to rest, and she hastened forthwith to Nanny Ferly, her next neighbour, to whom she told the same story, word for word, and had the satisfaction—if satisfaction it can be called—of seeing every circumstance listened to with the deepest attention, and every syllable believed as readily as if it had been part of a sermon.

"Ay, ay, Margate," said her auditor, when she had heard the story to an end, "its a warning, shure aneugh; and that will be seen before lang; for I never kenned a warning fail. I'll mind that nicht as lang as I live, when the warning came for my sister's dochter, Lizzy Lawmont; and weel I wat she was as dear to me as if she had been my ain bairn—though I've aye been spared the fashery o' bairns. Aweel, the doctor said she was greatly better; and sae, as I was complainin at the time, she was taen ben the house to let me get some rest; and Lizzy Duncan—glaikit hizzy! as she has turned oot—cam to sit up for the night. The doors were baith steekit, and the lamp was blawn out in the expectation that she would fa' asleep, and I was lying waukin, with the *worm in my lug*, when I hears a rap at the windock, juist as ye heard it, and something said *Lizzy*, as laigh and as plain as I'm saying it enoo. Aweel, I startit up, expecting to find the dear lassie a corpse, but it was some time before I could gang ben to see; and when I did gang ben I found her waukening frae a sleep; and Lizzy Duncan said she had sleepit mair than twa hours. But, from that minute, I kenn'd brawly what was to happen, and from that minute she grew waur and waur, till the neist nicht about ten o'clock, when the speerit left her weel-faured clay to the worms. Sae, Margate, never build yoursel up in Nelly's nonsense about *lads*: she's a puir haverin body; and, as shure as the sun rises and sets, your Mary is gaun fast fast from this world, e'en as my Lizzy gaed before her."

The poor mother was affected to tears by these lugubrious observations. The propriety of apprizing Mary of her approaching fate was next adverted to by Nanny. Margaret did not adopt her views of the matter at first; but when the culpability of allowing her daughter to indulge in the vanities of the world, when so near her end, was represented to her, she gave her consent with a flood of tears; and, after making some arrangements for communicating the necessary information, they parted.

The day, for one in the middle of winter, appeared to be uncommonly inviting, and Mary, who now fancied herself quite well, proposed going to church. To this proposal she expected a number of objections from her mother, but she was rather agreeably disappointed, for Margaret only observed, in an unusually solemn tone, that "folk should gang to the kirk as lang as they were able," and she accordingly went. When the congregation was dismissed, the air was almost as mild as if it had been summer; the sun shone faintly but cheerfully upon the faded scene, giving an unwonted appearance of warmth to the southern slopes, and sunny side of the hedges. Some feathery songsters were still warbling their "wilde notes," from the leafless trees, and, on her way home, Mary felt her spirits cheered, and her whole frame invigorated by the fresh air and the universal calm. The scene, the season, and the sacred day, alike seemed to "woo the heart to meditation;" and she was proceeding a short way in advance of the other worshippers, doubtless wrapped in some reverie, when her thoughts, whatever they might be, were dissipated by Nanny Ferly, who, puffing and panting from the effects of rapid travelling, now came up and addressed her from behind.

"That's a braw gown ye have on the day, Mary," were her first words, uttered in a tone of more than sepulchral solemnity.

"Nae brawer than ordinary," was Mary's reply.

This did not appear to be exactly the answer which had been anticipated, and Nanny—who, like other far-sighted individuals, had no doubt calculated the chances of the conversation, and provided herself with sentiments suitable to the occasion—seemed to feel rather *out*. She soon recovered however, and adjusting her sails to the wind, proceeded upon a new tack.

"I was just thinking, as I came up behint you," she went on, "what vain and frail creatures we a' are! We labour to deck out our bodies in dainty claes, and to appear strong, and healthful, and engaging in the eyes of others, when we should be thinking of our winding-sheets and our coffins, and meditating on the worms which are shortly to prey upon us in darkness. An' maybe at the very time when we are bestowing the greatest care upon thae worldly vanities death may be hovering owre us, with his hand stretched out to smite, and giving us *warning* to prepare for our last gasp, and that sma' house which is theekit wi' the lang grass o' the kirkyard."

"A' that may be true," rejoined Mary; "but what, if I may speir, has gi'en sic a kirkyard-turn to your conversation the day? I am better now, I assure you, and I hope you dinna think that, because I had the cauld aught days since, and because I have on a new gown the day, I maun die neist week."

"That's just the way with foolish young creatures in general, and you amang the lave," resumed her companion, waxing yet more solemn in her tone and manner of speaking. "They aye keep the day of distress and of death far

away from themselves: but death stays not his dart for their folly, and the messenger will come at his time, whether they will think of his coming, or whether they will keep their thoughts fixed upon wordly vanity."

"What *is* the meaning of all this?" said Mary, who now began to feel somewhat alarmed. "Has anybody persuaded you that I am really dying, or that I am not as likely to live as others of my age, because I have had a slight cold from which I am now perfectly recovered? Tell me at once, for I can endure your mysterious hints no longer."

"Then I must tell you the truth," said Nanny, whose voice had now reached the uttermost pitch of solemnity which it could compass—"I must tell you the truth, though I had meant to prepare you, but in part, for what is before you. And, think not lightly of it, I beseech you, for it is indeed a terrible thing to go down to the grave in the bloom of youth, and to be a feast for *snails* and worms, when we are promising ourselves many days of worldly enjoyment. But, as I said, I maun e'en tell ye the truth, as I tell'd my ain dear Lizzy Lawmont, when she was on her deathbed; and weel it was that I did tell her without delay; for, from that minute, puir Lizzy postit to her grave."

Here she went over the whole story of the *warning*, with such additions, emendations, and exaggerations, as were necessary to give it its full effect. In this department of literary science she displayed a power of contrivance, and an ingenuity which might have done honour to a professed *story-teller*. But, in the present instance, her art seemed to be almost thrown away; for, after she had given the finishing touch to the picture—and she did it with a master-hand—

"Is that a'?" said Mary, with a smile, which she wed that her heart was greatly, if not wholly, relieved, "is that a'?" she repeated in a tone which made her fellow-traveller turn her eyes to heaven, with a feeling of pious indignation.

"Ay, that's a'," rejoined Nanny, with a degree of pique in her manner which she could not conceal; "and little effect it *a'* seems to hae upon you! But I maun go and spier for auld John Gavel, wha has been sair distressed for mair than a fortnight; and sae, guid-day." As she spoke the last word, she left Mary to pursue her journey alone, and turned down another road with the friendly intention, no doubt, of persuading Mr Gavel that he was beyond all hope of recovery."

Wonderful as it may seem, after what had happened, Mary continued to enjoy good health, and, what was still more unaccountable, excellent spirits, for a whole fortnight. Without making any direct allusion to the *warning*, from which she evidently wished to keep at as great a distance as possible, she did everything in her power to dissipate her mother's apprehensions on that subject; but at the end of this period, the fears of the latter were again awakened in all their force, and as soon as the neighbours were astir, she again hastened to lay the burden of her distress before Nanny Ferly.

"O Nanny, Nanny!" said she, wringing her hands, as she entered the domicil, "sic a night as I've passed! If the Lord should give me strength to endure, I must not complain; but, I fear if thae awfu things continue to happen about our house, I'll no stand it lang, or if I do stand it, I'll surely lose my reason."

"What have you seen or heard?" inquired Nanny eagerly, as soon as she could get in a word.

"I've heard as meikle as micht drive a mither oot o' her senses," was the reply; "and it has driven rest frae my bed, and ilky Sabbath-day's-thocht out o' my head. But, to tell ye what it was:—Some time after midnight, I heard the very same sharp rap at the window that I heard yesternight was a fortnight; and, as I've never sleepit sound since that awfu nicht, I started up, and listened. Aweel, after a while, the rap was repeated, but naething spake; and then I heard a deep, low sound upon the window-frame, which I could compare to naethin save the noise of bringing in an empty coffin; and then Nelly Jackson's dog gae a bark, and I heard nae mair. I was aye trying to convince mysel that it micht be only a trick the first time, and this conviction gathered strength when I saw the lassie keep her health frae day to day; but, I doubt, I doubt, something *is* gaun to happen now!"

"Ay, ay!" was Nanny's response; and, as she spoke, her voice assumed its gravest tone; "it's owre like something *will* happen, and that before it's lang. Poor John Gavel's wife heard a soughing i' the lum twa nichts afore he died; and I tell'd baith her and him what wad happen, and happen it did, sure enough."

Unquestionable as these warnings had been considered, their fulfilment, to Nanny's great discomfiture, did not follow so speedily as had been expected. The new year season again came round without anything extraordinary having happened; and with it came Jenny Jackson's wedding. Jenny's scheme, like the "schemes" of the beforementioned "mice and men," had entirely failed. With a degree of vanity which may be easily pardoned, she had been led to suppose that James Duff was really attached to her, while he, in reality, only bestowed some attention upon her for the purpose of *plaguing* Andrew, and to amuse himself when he had nothing else to do; but, from the evening on which he first saw Mary Mackenzie, he had become less and less assiduous in these attentions, till, in the end, she began to grow fearful of "losing the market" altogether, and was glad to accept an offer of marriage from Andrew, almost as soon as it was made. But, though the said James, in country phrase, had *drawn back*, he had carefully avoided everything like a quarrel; and, as they had been fellow servants, and had, moreover, been upon the most friendly terms up to the very day on which they parted, he was invited to the wedding.

Passing over the ceremony, and all that concerned it, Mary Mackenzie was also among the wedding guests, and she did not appear to be forgotten by James Duff; for he embraced the first opportunity which presented itself of renewing their old acquaintance, by placing himself beside her. Upon this occasion, she appeared to receive him with more open frankness than she had ever done before, while he appeared highly gratified with the change of sentiment which she now manifested towards him. For a time, they carried on a sort of exclusive conversation, in very low and confidential tones; and, when Mary afterwards complained that she felt uncomfortably warm from the number of people congregated in the small room, James proposed to take a walk in the open air. This proposal was readily agreed to; and, the evening being calm and still, though dark and cloudy, they sauntered for some distance along the road, in the direction which led out of the village. James did not seem to suppose that any one would expect their return; he seemed to have forgotten everything except his companion; and he would have wandered on, neglectful alike of the distance from home and the lapse of time, had not Mary ventured to remind him of the possibility of their being missed from the company if they should prolong their walk, and hinted the propriety of immediately returning.

This hint—gentle in itself, and sounded, or rather whispered in his ear, by a voice the very gentlest imaginable—nevertheless, seemed to strike him as something wholly unexpected; and, while they turned to retrace their steps, he appeared rather at a loss what to say. The truth was, he had been thinking, for some time past, of introducing a subject in which he felt he was deeply interested; but, as

he had never in his life before had occasion to introduce such a subject to the notice of a woman, he knew not how to begin, and hence his inattention to the matter of miles and furlongs, and the length of their walk. Fearing, however, that another opportunity equally favourable might not soon occur, or perhaps he might be influenced by the idea that some one more favourably situated might supersede him—it matters little which—but at length he did make out to declare his affection, with what tones, or in what words, has not been recorded.

The days at this season of the year being nearly at the shortest, and the nights at the longest, the evening's festivity was early begun, and the bridal merriment had lasted, at least, five hours before ten o'clock. By this time, James Duff, who had a number of miles to travel before he could reach his master's farm, and who, moreover, had to attend his work next day, began to think of taking his departure. But, while the mirth and festivity had been proceeding within, the weather had been getting gradually more and more stormy without. For the last half hour, the wind had been howling furiously and loud around the house; the few stars which were visible "sent down a sklintin light;" the clouds, previously accumulated, had begun to career overhead; and, at the time spoken of, a blinding fall of snow came on. James, however, would have proceeded on his journey; but Mary, as soon as she saw the state of the weather, insisted on the propriety, or rather necessity of his stopping till morning. With her wishes in this respect he declared himself ready to comply, if she could only find some place of shelter where they might pass what remained of the night, and promise to keep him company. But with this she was not to be satisfied. Though he seemed to set little value on his health, she said that she could not consent to see him wilfully throwing it away. The night was now piercing cold; and, as he must be fatigued with his previous journey, and would have to work hard next day, she insisted on being allowed to provide him with a bed. Beds, however, were not easy to be found in the neighbourhood—their being in most of the houses no more accommodation than what was necessary for the families they contained; but the ingenuity of woman, when really and fairly set to work, is seldom baffled. She soon recollected a female acquaintance who slept alone; and, by taking up her quarters with this individual, her own bed would be left for the reception of him for whose comfort she now seemed to consider it her duty to provide. This arrangement completed, she conducted him to her mother's, where no opposition was offered to her scheme; and, after placing a light for him in her own little room, and bidding him an affectionate good night, she left him to his repose, which, as the sequel will shew, was not destined to be unbroken.

Both pleased and excited by the occurrences of the evening, the blood coursed his veins too rapidly to admit of sleep for a time. He had, however, closed his eyes, and a dream had begun to operate upon his imagination—it was a dream of a house which he could call his own, a clean hearth, and a cheerful fire, with himself snugly seated in an arm-chair on one side of it, and Mary sitting on the other knitting a stocking; and, ever as he addressed her, bending on him a pair of smiling eyes. Alas! what is the happiness of man, in most instances, save a dream—sometimes a waking one, sometimes a sleeping one; but seldom real! From this pleasing illusion he was awakened by a noise at the window; and the house, clean hearth, cheerful fire, arm-chair, along with Mary and her stocking, at once disappeared in darkness. He heard her name repeated in a low whisper; and, after a considerable pause, the noise increased. Upon this occasion, it appeared to be something worse than an ordinary *warning*—bad as that might be—for it continued. At first jealousy took possession of his heart—"Could it be possible that Mary was making a dupe of him, while she really preferred another? And could it be that *other* who was now making a noise for the purpose of awakening her?" These were questions which, in his first surprise, he naturally put to himself, without being exactly able to answer them. Something more serious, however, than the awakening of young women seemed to be in the wind, and his next thought was of robbers. This idea, upon farther consideration, he was also forced to reject; for he had remarked that, except the bed upon which he was lying, a table, a small mirror, and some trifling articles of female attire, there was neither chest, chest of drawers, nor anything else in the apartment, which could possibly conceal treasure; and it was not likely that practised robbers would put themselves to much trouble for beds, tables, and six-inch mirrors. Upon these things he had ample time to reflect; for the operations at the window neither appeared to be scientific nor successful. They consisted of a sort of half-cautious rubbing and scratching, which was kept up with little intermission; and, at last, he felt inclined to think that the whole might be the work of some one who had sat too long at the bottle; and, after being deserted by his companions, had forgotten to go to bed. But, then, unless he were in some way or other connected with Mary, or unless his visits at least had, on some former occasion, been sanctioned by her, what reason could he have for selecting that particular window as the scene of his nocturnal operations? A certain degree of reviving jealousy, mingled with a strong feeling of curiosity, now took full possession of the doubtful lover's mind; and having, to his own astonishment, remained so long silent, he resolved to await the issue without uttering a word. Fortunately he had heard nothing of warnings, and but little of ghosts; the little which he had heard, he entirely discredited; and, by attributing the whole directly to *natural* and not *supernatural* agency, he felt strengthened to abide by his resolution—a circumstance which could have hardly occurred had he held, in its full perfection, the doctrine of the *visibility* of spirits.

The noise continued for nearly an hour and a-half; and, when it ceased, after something like a gentle wrench bestowed upon the window frame, he heard a foot cautiously approaching the bed on which he lay; and, by compressing his lips with a desperate effort, and almost stifling his very breath, he suppressed an involuntary inclination to start up, and either place himself in a posture of defence, or give the alarm. In half a minute more, he felt a cold, rough, clamy hand pass over his face. A freezing sense of terror, which had nearly converted him from his scepticism with respect to ghosts, shot directly to his heart, and a chill perspiration was bursting from his brow; with the next breath he had probably started to his feet, and attempted to fly; but, at that instant, he was relieved by hearing a voice with which he was well acquainted, in soft and tremulous accents, pronounce the word *Mary*. That he might be certain as to the identity of the speaker, he waited till he heard the name repeated, and then spoke—

"Friend," said he, in a stern voice, "I doubt you seek one who is not here;" and, as he spoke, he made an attempt to grasp the former speaker. But his words, few and commonplace as they were, had produced a more instantaneous effect upon that individual than the most powerful exorcism of a Catholic priest ever produced upon rats, mice, or any other pest of humanity. The moment the first syllable sounded in his ears, he made a hasty retreat; and, after the intruder was gone, the little that remained of the night passed without farther disturbance.

Mary had felt too much oppressed with tumultuous, yet

happy feelings, to sleep during the night, so that there was little danger of her being late in rising; and, according to a promise made on the previous evening, she was at her mother's cottage some hours before daylight. In a few minutes the fire was lighted up, and she was proceeding to cook a slight repast for the stranger, when he himself made his appearance in that apartment which might be called the kitchen. She saluted him by inquiring "how he had rested?" and he answered her with an attempt at civility; but his eye did not meet her's as it had done on the previous evening; and altogether there was an alteration in his manner which struck her forcibly. She next begged him to be seated; but, instead of complying with her request, he looked at his watch, and then represented to her the necessity of his being gone immediately. She seemed anxious that he should stop till she could set before him the victuals which she had been preparing, simply, as she said, "that he might not go abroad so early with an empty stomach;" but her entreaties were thrown away; and, when nothing could persuade him to delay his journey only for a few minutes, she accompanied him out in a state of perplexed feeling not easily described. She had walked by his side to some distance without anything having passed between them, except some trite observations concerning the weather, which was now fair—the fall of snow having only lasted for a short time—when, unable longer to endure this state of suspense, she asked, in a hesitating tone, if "anything had occurred during the night to disturb him?"

"I have been a fool!" was his tart reply; "but I am at least wise enough to repent of my folly in time. I was loth to believe the evidence of my own senses when they testified against you, and I even tried to argue myself into a belief of your innocence, but your question puts the matter beyond a doubt; and now, farewell for ever!"

Mary would have remonstrated with him as to the rashness of his conduct—she would have told him what she knew. The warmth of a lately awakened affection, a woman's pride, a woman's delicacy, and a feeling of indignation at being thus suspected, were all at strife in her bosom; and it can scarcely be matter of surprise, if, for some seconds, they deprived her of the use of speech. As he was turning to depart, however, she mustered as much resolution as to repeat the word "farewell" firmly, which was all she could say.

When left alone, Mary felt so much agitated, that it was some time before she could endure the thought of being seen. Darkness and solitude seemed to accord best with the state of her feelings, and to afford her the only consolation which she was capable of receiving. In this state of mind, it was some time before she could think of returning home; and, when she did return, a new scene of mystery and confusion awaited her.

At the door she met her mother, who, with a countenance uncommonly solemn, was just coming out. Margate, who, from having slept more soundly than was her usual, had only heard the concluding part of the nocturnal noises, was again in a great distress. She believed them nothing less than a *third warning;* which, according to vulgar superstition, is an infallible proof; and on the present, as on former occasions, she was hastening to communicate this fresh confirmation of her fears to Nanny Ferly. But she was immediately recalled by her husband, who, in returning from the yard whether he had been to reconnoitre the morning sky, for the purpose of ascertaining what sort of weather they were likely to have for the day, declared, that "their back window had been taken out and that Mary's room had certainly been robbed." On being made acquainted with this circumstance, great was the good dame's consternation; and yet it were difficult to say whether she would not have preferred the loss of her daughter's property, or any other property which might be in the house, to those distressing fears which she had hitherto entertained for the loss of that daughter herself.

"God be thankit," she exclaimed, after a short pause;—"there was but little to rob."

A strict examination was now instituted to ascertain if property had not been abstracted from other parts of the house; but in this examination Mary took little share.

"What's the lassie doin dreamin there, as if she were bewildered," cried her mother, at last, with some impatience. "Ye're a bonny ane indeed to stand as unconcerned as if ye were the steeple, when the hale house is turned heels ower head to see how muckle that scoundrel has carried aff wi' him."

This seemed to awaken her from her reverie. "Mother," said she firmly, "you may spare your bad names, for whatever he *may do*, he will neither rob nor steal; and, so far as I can see, the scoundrel of whom *you* complain has carried off but little."

Mary's assertion was strictly and literally true; for, after the closest search, it was found that the whole of the mortar which secured the little window on the outside had been carefully displaced by means of a large nail, or some other iron instrument, and the window itself set down upon the ground without any of the glass being broken; but nothing was missing, and not a single article seemed to have been so much as moved from its place. Great was the wonder which now rose as to who the depredator could be, and what motive he could possibly have had for acting so strange a part. Mary was strictly questioned as to the time and manner of her guests departure; but her evidence tended in no way to clear up the mystery. After much conjecture had been wasted to no purpose, as daylight grew broad, a hat was discovered under a low-growing apple tree, which appeared to have been brushed by the branches from the head of the depredator while he was making his escape. It was carefully examined, but it bore no distinctive mark except the letters "A. A." and "R. D." in he crown, neither of which could be deciphered. Mary was again questioned as to its owner; but she only said, "it might belong to anybody for anything she knew;" and, in the true spirit of discovery, it was carried by her mother to the house of the new married pair. No sooner had Jenny Jackson, now Mrs Angus, seen it, then she exclaimed "whaur is Mary—whaur is Mary." Mary was sent for.

"Whether is Ritchie or Jamie gaun to get ye noo, Mary?" she inquired, in an ecstasy of triumphant feeling. "I doubt it's Ritchie after a', for this is his hat—the very hat he bought from Andrew before he gaed to the bleachfield; and Andrew said it was naething but you that took him there. See there is baith their names—A for Andrew, A for Angus, R for Ritchie, D for Drycraig."

The whole was now out. Ritchie, from having lain down and fallen asleep without his hat, was thrown into a fever, which, after having brought him very near the grave, cured him effectually of his drunken habits and his maudlin affection at the same time. Though James Duff had departed in wrath, he soon returned in softened feeling, and in less than a year he was married to Mary Mackenzie. Nanny Ferly was an incurable; but the ridicule to which she was subjected upon this occasion made her more cautious in the selection of her subjects. And thus ends our story of The Warning.



WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

EDWARD MOWBRAY

Edward Mowbray was a young man of very superior talents and acquirements, of agreeable manners and pleasant exterior. Few, indeed, might equal him in these respects. He was, at the period when we take up his history, clerk in a respectable mercantile house in a certain maritime town in Scotland, which, to prevent any inconvenient identification of facts and circumstances—for, it is "owre true a tale" we are about to tell—we shall take the liberty of calling it Seaport.

In the employment of which we have spoken, Edward Mowbray had been for several years, and had given every satisfaction to his employers. His steadiness, honesty, diligence, and activity, were exemplary, and left no doubt on all who knew him that he would one day arrive at eminence. Such indications are not often deceptive. Edward himself was of a bold and aspiring disposition—full of ambition, and of a burning desire to cut a dash in the world, and thus realize the high hopes which his friends had formed of his future career.

At this period, Edward Mowbray's prospects of success were naturally and exclusively associated with mercantile pursuits; for to such had he been brought up, and to such alone had he been taught to look for that prosperity which he so eagerly desired to attain. To what others could he look with better prospects of success! Strange, however, are the changes which the events of a day—nay, of a single hour—often effect on our destinies; mocking the most far-sighted calculations as to the future, and at once altering and overturning all those views and prospects which such calculations had opened up to the mental eye.

At the very moment when Edward Mowbray was rejoicing in the prospect of a step of promotion in the mercantile establishment to which he belonged, and which he looked upon as an earnest of further advancement, a simple penny letter, which was put into his hand by the postman, one morning as he went home to breakfast, at once changed all his views in life, and hurried all his hopes and anticipations into an entirely new channel.

This letter was from a brother of his mother's, who held a situation in the office of the Admiralty. It had come to Seaport by a private hand, and had there been put into the Post-Office. Its purpose was to make offer of an appointment as clerk in the Admiralty Office to Edward Mowbray. The writer said that the situation was a subordinate one, and the salary only a hundred a-year; but added, that if Edward accepted of it, and conducted himself with propriety, discharging his duties faithfully and diligently, he might calculate on speedy promotion, and on the certainty of arriving, in process of time, at a very handsome income. Edward's uncle concluded by strongly recommending his nephew to accept of the offer now made him.

This offer was too advantageous to admit of any hesitation, and neither was any shewn on the part of him to whom it was made. He immediately wrote off to his uncle expressing his willingness to take the situation in question, and inquiring when his presence would be desired. An answer, in course of post, called upon him to come to London immediately. Edward Mowbray obeyed the summons, and, in less than three weeks after, was at the desk appointed him in the office of the Admiralty. His duties were arduous; for the French War had just broke out, and there was an immense deal to do, in the way of making out detailed states of all kinds regarding the navy, the number of ships in commission, their strength in men and guns, their different stations, &c., &c., the wants which were to be supplied, together with large enrolments of seamen, and a prodigious correspondence, all to copy into the various books of the office.

These weighty duties, however, Edward Mowbray encountered unshrinkingly, and discharged with great ability and dexterity.

Thus employed, time passed over the young man's head till between two and three years had elapsed, when he suddenly presented himself to his astonished and delighted friends at Seaport. He had obtained leave of absence for a week or two from the Admiralty, and had come down to spend this time amongst his old acquaintances in the place of his nativity.

If Edward Mowbray's friends, however, rejoiced in the sight of himself, they still more rejoiced in the prosperity which everything about him indicated. He was dressed in the first style of fashion, and was covered with the most costly jewellery. His watch alone, as he told some of his intimates who were admiring its elegance, cost a hundred guineas, inclusive of chain and seals. He was attended by a footman in handsome livery, and lodged at the first hotel in the town, where he gave a series of elegant and expensive entertainments.

Edward Mowbray was now, in short, a great man; at least, in so far as the appearance of affluent circumstances contributes to impart that character.

While his friends, however, rejoiced in those indications of Edward's prosperity, they—even those most sincerely attached to him, and who entertained the highest opinion of his abilities—could not but secretly wonder at the astonishing rapidity of his advancement. He had only been two years and a-half away, and when he went, he had barely as much money as was necessary to the fitting him out, and defraying his expenses to London. This was also known. Now he appeared amongst them with the apparent command of means of a man of fortune.

It was a puzzling case; but its only result was, to inspire a high opinion of the liberality of remuneration in the Admiralty Office, and of the extraordinary merits of him who had so soon secured so large a share of it.

Edward Mowbray himself accounted for the circumstance—not directly, however, for this the delicacy of his friends rendered unnecessary, but incidentally, by saying that he had been promoted—which was true—and had been presented by the Board with a handsome sum of money, as a reward for his fidelity and diligence.

Having exhausted the leave granted him by the Board, Edward Mowbray returned to his duties, which he continued to prosecute with a zeal and ability that soon raised him to one of the most confidential appointments connected with the business of the Admiralty Office, and to which was attached a salary of some four or five hundred a-year.

This income, however, although handsome, and sufficient to enable Edward Mowbray to live respectably, if not luxuriously, could not yet be reckoned ample enough for the style in which he did live.

His house was a very large one, and, in other respects, amongst the best in London. Its furniture, too, was superb; its cellars well-stocked; and a powdered lackey gave the finishing touch to the splendour of the elegant domicil of the Admiralty clerk. Edward Mowbray kept also a couple of riding-horses, and indulged in many other extravagances of a similar description.

It was when things had attained this pitch of prosperity with Edward Mowbray, that he one day sat himself down at his escritoir, and wrote the following letter, addressed, as the reader will perceive, to a personage to whom he is now, for the first time, introduced:—

"My Dearest Julia," began this letter, "the time has at length arrived when it is in my power to prove to you, by the most unquestionable of all evidence, the sincerity of my truth and love. My late promotion, of which I duly apprised you, together with some other advantageous circumstances, enable me, my dearest life, to invite you to be the sharer of my fortunes. I have provided a comfortable house for you, having spared neither pains nor expense to render it worthy of its fair mistress.

"I will be at Seaport, at farthest, by the end of next week, by which time, my dearest Julia, have all such preparations and arrangements made as fall within your province, for the ceremony which is to unite our destinies for life, and which I should wish to take place as soon after my arrival as possible, since my presence at the Admiralty is so indispensable, that I cannot count on having more than a day or two to spare.

"Till we meet, then, my dearest Julia, never again to part, I trust, in life, believe me to be ever thine," &c. &c.

Agreeably to the tenor of this letter, Edward Mowbray arrived, about the time specified, at Seaport, and, on the following day, was wedded to the fair and amiable girl whom we have just heard him addressing in so affectionate a strain. She had been the chosen of his heart before he left Seaport; and, during the interval that separated them, their correspondence had been maintained with all the constancy and fervour of the most devoted love.

Edward Mowbray's appearance and personal accompaniments of all kinds were, on this occasion, still more splendid than on the former. Of money he seemed to have an unlimited command, and this he lavished with an unsparing hand, sufficiently proving that he was as liberal as he was wealthy. But there was now a cloud on Edward Mowbray's brow, an air of melancholy and abstraction which did not escape notice, although he was evidently at much pains to conceal this evidence of an uneasy mind. His friends wondered whence it could proceed, and they wondered the more, that they saw so little reason for sadness in the position of their friend; but, on the contrary, everything which usually secures the largest share of earthly felicity. Still, so it was; Edward Mowbray was, evidently, from some cause or other, an unhappy man; although what this cause could be no one could possibly conjecture. It was only, however, by a few intimates, that this unhappiness was remarked; by all others, it was either unseen or unheeded.

On the day after their marriage, Edward Mowbray and his fair bride embarked on board a vessel bound for London; his leave, as he anticipated, having been limited to a very short time.

With the captain of the vessel—who was a blunt, honest seaman, but, withal, unusually intelligent—Mr Mowbray entered into conversation so soon as the ship had got fairly under way. The captain was, at the moment, at the helm; and, it being a fine afternoon, Mr Mowbray and his young bride were seated on the quarter-deck.

Edward Mowbray opened the conversation by remarking, and, at the same time, glancing at the row of guns which were thickly planted around the ship.

"You seem well armed, captain."

"Much need, sir, in these times," replied the latter. "We don't know when we may have a Frenchman down upon us; for they seem to know all the outs and ins of our naval affairs, as well as we do ourselves—where to come on, and where to keep off."

What could there be in these remarks of the captain to blanch the cheek of Edward Mowbray, and to excite in him that degree of agitation which prevented him, for some time, from saying a word more, it would not, perhaps, be easy to say; probably it was the danger of an attack from a privateer, which the captain's remarks indirectly pointed out as a very probable contingency. But Mowbray was no such coward as this. His fears, however, might be all on account of his young and beautiful wife. It might be so.

All *might* be as we have said; whether it was or not, however, it is certain that Edward Mowbray did evince the strong and painful feeling described, on the captain's making the remark we have recorded.

"Indeed, captain, that's odd!" said Edward, after a pause of a second or two.

"Yes, odd it is, and very odd too!" replied the former. "I can't comprehend it. There, whenever a station is left, for a moment, by the ship-of-war in charge of it, down comes half-a-dozen privateers or frigates, and cuts ye out, or burns our craft in our very harbours. And, there again, let us send out a ship or two, to give them a slap at any particular point, and they are sure to be met by double their force, and sent to the right about, without doing any good whatever; but, quite the contrary, sustaining serious loss. It's a devilish queer business—devilish queer that we can't move a peg one way or other, but Johnny Crawpaw knows all about it aforehand. I have remarked this here matter for a long while past, and can't help thinking there's roguery somewhere amongst us."

"How!—what do you mean, captain?" said Edward Mowbray, with intense earnestness.

"Why, I mean," replied the former, "that there is somebody a-peaching; somebody blabbing; some one or other, or p'raps more, giving Mounseer notice of all that's doing. That's what I mean, sir; and I have no doubt of it. There's a rotten plank somewhere, take my word for that; and it should be immediately looked out, or it may swamp the ship."

To all this, Edward Mowbray made no other reply than merely smiling, with an air of what seemed affected incredulity. Whether he believed or not, however, in the truth of the captain's allegations of treason, it was sufficiently evident that, for some reason or other, he did not like the subject; for he had been an impatient listener; and, when the captain had concluded, he rose abruptly from his seat, took his young wife by the arm, and, under pretence that the night air was getting chill, hurried her below.

On reaching the cabin, Edward Mowbray flung himself at full length on one of its cushioned seats, and seemed lost for some time in a fit of gloomy abstraction.

Unable to conceive what was the matter with her husband, yet seeing but too plainly that something or other oppressed him, Edward's young wife approached him, and, taking one of his hands gently in her's, asked him, in the tenderest tones, if he was unwell.

"Oh, unwell, my love? no, no," exclaimed Mowbray, starting from his recumbent position, as if suddenly awakened from a dream. "No, no. I am quite well, perfectly well, thank you, my dear;" and he embraced his wife

affectionately. Nor did he, during any part of the subsequent voyage, betray the slightest depression of feeling, but, on the contrary, exhibited even more than his wonted cheerfulness; and thus continued till the end of the voyage, which was completed in safety, and in much about the usual time.

On their arrival in London, Edward Mowbray conducted his wife to her future residence; and greatly was she surprised and delighted with the elegance and splendour it exhibited. In an ecstasy of rapture she flew from apartment to apartment, uttering exclamations of mingled joy and astonishment at the magnificence that everywhere met her view.

"Where on earth, Edward," she exclaimed, in all the simplicity of extreme youth—for Mrs Mowbray had just passed her seventeenth year—"where on earth, Edward dear, did you get all these elegant things? This, I declare, is more like the fairy palaces I have read of, than the ordinary dwelling-house of ordinary people. How good of you this, Edward. How good of you. Oh! how happy we shall be."

"I hope so, my love," replied Mowbray with a smile, but it was a melancholy one. He did not intend it to be so, yet so it was.

"Oh! no doubt of it, no doubt of it, dear Edward," exclaimed his young wife, putting her arm fondly through his, and thus leading, or rather dragging him through the different apartments, many of which she was visiting for the twentieth time. "No doubt of it; it cannot be otherwise: I'm sure it shall be my study to please you in everything; to do all in my power to shew you how grateful I am for this proof of your love, dear Edward."

Having gratified the first hungering of curiosity, Edward's young bride consented to sit down to an elegant banquet which her husband had ordered to be prepared. And here, again, the fond and inexperienced young wife saw much to admire and to be delighted with. These were, principally, a profusion of choice silver-plate, and of rich China and crystal ware; splendours which once more called forth the liveliest expressions of admiration and of inquiry as to where and how they were obtained.

"How, Julia, my love, should they be obtained," replied her husband, smiling, "but by paying money for them."

"No doubt, Edward dear," said his artless bride; "but I had no idea you were so rich; none at all. I did not think you had more than four or five hundred a-year, but I see you must now have at least as many thousands.

"Hush, hush, Julia, my love," said Edward Mowbray, speaking in a low and somewhat agitated tone; "you must not allow the servants to hear you talk in this strain. I have no larger sum of regular salary than you say; but there are perquisites of office, my dear, that add considerably to my fixed income.

"Oh! I understand, Edward dear; I understand. Well, I was sure you had it in some shape or other. It couldn't be otherwise; for it must have taken thousands to furnish this splendid house in this way."

"Well, well, my love, and if it did, never mind," said Edward Mowbray, now a little impatiently. "Just you enjoy it, and say no more about it. It's all paid for at any rate."

At this moment, the door bell of Mr Mowbray's splendid mansion was violently rung.

Edward Mowbray started, and looked pale, but endeavoured to conceal his agitation from his wife. He said nothing, however, but sat silent, and apparently in mortal agony of mind, awaiting the result of the alarum which had just been sounded. For this he had not long to wait. In a moment after, a tall thin personage, with Roman nose and large black whiskers, and dressed in a surtout covered with braiding, burst into the room, exclaiming as he did so—

"Ah! mon cher amie, my dear friend, Monsieur Moopray, how you do?" and he rushed towards Edward with extended hand.

The latter, evidently quite relieved at finding this was the personage he had to deal with, rose from his seat with great alacrity, and returned the greeting of his visiter with the same cordiality with which it was offered.

"Ah! Count, delighted to see you," said Mr Mowbray. "How did you learn so soon of my arrival?"

"Did not learn at all, my dear friend," replied the Count. "Jus call on chaunce, and find you vas coom home, and so dere is de matter. It was all de bon fortune, de good luck."

"Nothing new stirring?" said Edward Mowbray, with a peculiar look of intelligence.

"No, noting," replied the Count, drawlingly; "noting particuliere; dere is jus some leetle talk of de defeat of two British ship of war who make an attempt to cut some vess-els out of de harbour of Cherbourg."

Edward, without saying a word in reply, pressed his lips firmly together, and nodded significantly to his friend the Count.

During the conversation, Edward's young bride had been eyeing their visiter with looks of great curiosity, not unmingled with astonishment. She thought she had never seen so strange a looking personage in her life before. His tall thin form; the odd cast and expression of his countenance, rendered still more singular by the profusion of black hair which hung around it, in an endless complication of curls; the constant grin that sat upon that extraordinary face; the violent gesticulation with which he accompanied everything he said; the quantity of jewellery with which he was covered, in the shapes of rings, chains, and seals; and the mock air of fashion which finished off the external pretensions of this singular personage, all contributed to excite, to the highest degree, the astonishment and curiosity of Mrs Mowbray.

While the latter, however, as we have said, had been earnestly marking all the peculiarities of their visiter, that gentleman had been very little less busy in scrutinizing her. He had, from time to time, and even while he was speaking to her husband, turned round and examined her through his quizzing glass, regardless of the embarrassment which this specimen of politeness occasioned the object of his scrutiny.

The circumstance, however, having at length caught the attention of Mr Mowbray, who had been too much engrossed by other thoughts to notice it for some time, it reminded him of a duty he had overlooked.

"A thousand pardons, Count, for my negligence or rudeness—call it which you will. My wife, Count. Count de Sharking, Julia, my dear."

Ah! your lady, your vife, Monsieur Moopray," replied the Count, grinning from ear to ear, and advancing on tiptoe towards Mrs Mowbray, with a stoop so decided as bent him nearly double. "Hope your vell, my dear lady. Delighted to see de vife of my dear friend Monsieur Moopray. It is happiness I shall not expect, although I do hear someting of it pefore me friend go from home. But he jus give me de leetle hint, not much, no more."

Mrs Mowbray returned the soft greeting of the Count with the best grace she could.

This ceremony over, the Count, at the pressing request of Edward Mowbray, took his seat at table, and partook of some of the good things with which it was spread. To these he did every manner of justice, and did not conduct himself more unfairly towards the wine which followed. Of this he drank freely; and the proceeding was followed by its ordinary result: he became extremely talkative, and that, frequently, on subjects which his host by no means seemed to relish.

"I say, Moopray, thus opened the Count on one of those topics which appeared so disagreeable to the person he addressed—"I say, Moopray, you mus do that leetle

job for us I vas speak to you about, before you go from home. It will be vorse vone tousand pound to you, if it be vorse vone shillin, and it will be vorse vone trifle too to your friend, Count Sharking. Ha, ha; he vill have de leetle feel from it too; so you will serve yourself and your friend too, all in vone blow."

It was in vain that Mowbray endeavoured to arrest the volubility of his friend, first by looks, then by nods and winks, and, lastly, by touching his feet under the table. All would not do. On and on went the volatile Frenchman—for such, we need hardly say, he was—to the great annoyance of his host, who evidently dreaded his wife's gathering, from his remarks, what he did not choose she should know.

"Madam," continued the Count, turning to Mrs Mowbray, "your husband, me friend here, make great deal of money. Ah! great deal, and with no trooble at all—not de least. Jus for vone leetle scrap of paper, he got a tousan poun. Ah! clever dog your husband, madam. Nobody but his friends know how he make his money. Ha, ha, ha! It is vone grand secret.

Mrs Mowbray merely smiled at the equivocal sort of compliments to her husband's talents and powers of money-making; but by Mowbray himself they were received very differently: he sat scowling and biting his lips; and was evidently restrained from some violent outburst of anger, only by a secret reluctance to come to an open rupture with his guest.

At length, finding that he could by no other means arrest the Count's threatened disclosures, he started from his seat, and walked to the further end of the room, beckoning his guest to follow him. The latter did so, when the two having whispered together for a moment, returned to the table, and from that instant the Count forbore all remarks of the mysterious description in which he had been previously indulging, and, shortly after, took his leave.

On his departure—"Dear me, Edward love, what a strange man that is," said Mrs Mowbray. "Who, or what is he, on all the earth?"

"He is a French gentleman, my dear," replied the latter, drily; "an acquaintance of mine."

"A *gentleman* is he, Edward?" said his wife, who, with all her inexperience of the world, had quite penetration enough to perceive that, notwithstanding the rings and the braided surtout, the person in question had but little of the character about him which her husband assigned him, and to which he himself laid claim.

"Yes, my dear, a gentleman, a French gentleman," repeated Mowbray, carelessly, and evidently desirous of changing the subject of conversation. But his wife's curiosity regarding him had been too much excited to admit of her being thus so readily satisfied.

"Is he a mere acquaintance, Edward love?" she again inquired.

"Yes—no—something more," replied Mowbray. "We have occasionally a little business together."

"So I guessed, from what he said," rejoined Mrs Mowbray. "But what did he mean by his allusions to your making money so easily, and in such large sums."

"Pooh, nothing, my dear," said Mowbray. "He is a foolish talkative fellow; and will, at any time, rather speak nonsense than hold his tongue."

"I don't like him, Edward."

"Neither do I, my dear, to tell you a truth; but he is necessary to me; I cannot do without him; and it would be inconvenient for me to quarrel with him."

Edward's young bride said no more on the subject, but the whole scene of the evening had left unpleasant impressions on her mind, although she could not either say what these impressions were, nor why they had been made.

If, however, this first and single visit of Count Sharking had excited such disagreeable feelings in Mrs Mowbray, it cannot be supposed that the repetition of the former, without discovering any redeeming qualities in that personage, should tend in any way to lessen these feelings.

Subsequent to the period of which we speak, the visits of Count Sharking at Mr Mowbray's house were almost daily, but they were marked by somewhat peculiar circumstances.

They were always made at a late hour of the night; he was always closely muffled up in his cloak when he came; and there was an air of stealthiness and precaution about all he said and did.

On these occasions too, Mr Mowbray and the Count invariably retired together to a remote apartment—the door of which they always carefully secured on the inside—and there remained for hours in deep and earnest conversation, carried on in a tone so low and inaudible, as scarcely to exceed a whisper. Much rustling of paper too was heard by those whom curiosity induced to listen, together with the sound of pens inactive employment—thus leaving no doubt that their business, whatever it was, included a great deal of writing.

From these secret conferences, Edward Mowbray often returned to his wife both greatly exhausted and greatly depressed in mind. On such occasions, he would fling himself upon a sofa, and there lie for an entire hour without uttering a syllable, seemingly a prey to the most dreadful despondency. At other times, he would exhibit symptoms of the most extravagant joy, and alarm his wife by wild and uncontrolled bursts of hilarity. Seeing these very opposite effects of her husband's interviews with the Count, Mrs Mowbray did not know what to make of them. She could not form the most distant conception of their purpose, nor would her husband give her the slightest information on the subject. To all her inquiries he replied evasively, and with such an ill-concealed feeling of displeasure at their being made, that she at length refrained not only from putting such questions, but from all allusion to the subject.

This forbearance on the part of Mrs Mowbray, as to expressing the curiosity and anxiety she felt regarding the object and purpose of these strange and secret interviews, did not, however, extend to the suppression of her own secret feelings on the subject; she thought often and much about them, and she did so with much pain and uneasiness of mind; for, although she knew nothing of their purpose, she feared the worst; and yet, without being able to conjecture what that worst could be. The secrecy and mystery that hung over the proceedings of her husband and the Count, were, of themselves, sufficient cause for uneasy feelings; but it was the state of distraction into which they threw her husband, the dreadful effects which they seemed to have on his mind, that most distressed and alarmed her.

To all this, however, she was compelled to submit in silence, and with what patience she could, since it was the only subject on which she dared hold no converse with her husband.

Thus stood matters then with Edward Mowbray and his young wife, and thus they remained for three or four months, during all which time the mysterious meetings of Mowbray and the Count continued to take place from time to time, but still without discovering any obvious result. On Mowbray himself, however, these few months had effected a very marked change. In person he had grown thin and haggard-looking, and in temper nervous and morose. He seemed as if he lived in constant dread of some impending evil, or laboured under one of those desperate maladies of the mind, which lay the energies prostrate in a ruin, far more helpless and hopeless than

any that can be effected by the mere ailments of the body.

It was about this time, that Mrs Mowbray, one morning, found a paper on the floor of her bedroom, shortly after Mr Mowbray had left it to go out for his usual morning walk. She picked up the paper. It was a large sheet. She unfolded it, but could make little or nothing of its contents. To her it appeared a confused and unintelligible document. It contained what seemed to be sketches of sea-ports, intermingled with jottings running thus—"15 feet at pier at high water—may be entered with safety any time of tide. Battery of six guns on east side—in bad condition, and could not be readily manned or rendered effective—nothing to fear. Warrior, new ship—84 guns—530 men—fitting out for sea—supposed destination, Mediterranean—will sail in 14 days. Talk of an expedition against Tourmont—5 ships of line fitting out—Sheerness. Hurricane, 74 guns—498 men. Thunderer, 68 guns—400 men. Swift, 74—500 men. Recluse, 60 guns—397 men. Tearer, 50 guns—300 men. Will be all ready for sea 14th next month," &c. &c. &c.

With such matter as this then was the paper filled. Its contents exciting no interest in Mrs Mowbray, she immediately folded it up again, and laid it carelessly on the breakfast table to await her husband's return.

The moment Edward Mowbray entered the room, which he did shortly after, his eye fell upon the mysterious paper. On seeing it, he flew towards it, snatched it up, thrust it with trembling hand into his pocket, and, turning towards his wife, fiercely demanded how it came there. She told him.

"Has any one else seen it; any living soul?" he exclaimed in great agitation.

"Not one, Edward," replied Mrs Mowbray, alarmed at the extraordinary violence of her husband. "It has been in no hands but my own, seen by no one but myself."

"Thank God," exclaimed Mowbray, with great energy. Then, as if desirous of doing away any unfavourable impressions or suspicions, which his agitation and evident alarm might have excited in his wife, he affected a sudden complacency of manner, smiled, and resuming his usual tone of courtesy, said, addressing Mrs Mowbray—

"The secrets of office, you know, my dear, must not be divulged."

To Mrs Mowbray, this explanation of her husband's late violence, brief and indefinite as it was, was quite satisfactory, inasmuch as it tended to shew that it had merely proceeded from an anxious sense of duty, a highly commendable fidelity to the trust reposed in him.

We have at another part of this narrative represented its earlier events, as being coeval with the commencement of the first French war. This war, at the period to which we have now brought our story, was still raging with great violence, but, in too many instances, with little credit to the British arms. A very singular fatality, or something like it, attended a great number of our minor expeditions, at one time from actual defeat, at another, from abandonment, in consequence of finding the enemy in a state of complete preparation at the points intended to be attacked. Our coasters and merchantmen too were often captured on our very shores, and under such circumstances, as shewed very plainly that the enemy were well informed where they could commit those ravages with the greatest safety, and certainty of success—where fewest ships of war were stationed, and where the land batteries were in the most inefficient state.

It was some time before this extraordinary prescience, as it seemed, on the part of the enemy, attracted the notice of the public. This, however, it at length did, as we have seen exemplified in the case of the captain of the vessel by whom Edward Mowbray and his wife came to London. The sentiments of that person on the mysterious subject were now becoming those of the British public; while paragraphs of the following description were almost daily making their appearance in the papers, and still further exciting the general feelings on the subject to which they referred:—

"*Extraordinary Circumstance.*—It is our painful duty to record another instance of the defeat of the British arms, under the same inexplicable circumstances which have, for a long while past, marked so many of our encounters with the enemy.

The two ships-of-war, the Centaur and Bosphorus, which were lately fitted out, and sent against Cherbourg, have been baffled in their attempts on the shipping of that port, by the vigilance of the enemy, who, contrary to all previous belief on the subject, were found in a complete state of preparation. What is the meaning of this? We ask the question, referring to other and similar cases, for the fiftieth time. Either there must be gross mismanagement on the part of the government, or there must be some truth in those dark insinuations which are, at this moment, so seriously disturbing the public mind. We forbear saying more of this matter at present, but shall by no means lose sight of it."

Such was the identical paragraph which Mrs Mowbray was in the act of reading one day, when her husband came home to dinner.

"Any news, my love?" said Mowbray, seeing the paper in his wife's hand.

"Nothing very particular, Edward, I think," replied Mrs Mowbray; "but a paragraph here, mentioning the defeat of two of our ships that were sent against Cherbourg."

Mowbray looked agitated; but before he had time to make any reply—

"See, Edward dear!" said Mrs Mowbray, placing the newspaper before her husband, and putting her finger on the latter part of the paragraph she had just been reading. "What do they mean by 'dark insinuations.' I have observed several of these mysterious allusions, of late, in the papers. What do they mean?"

During the time Mrs Mowbray was speaking, her husband was employed in reading the sentence to which she pointed; and, if any one had marked the expression of his countenance while he did so, they would have been struck with the emotion which it indicated—his cheek grew pale, and his lip quivered. Having read the passage to which his attention had been called, Mowbray rose from his chair, and, to his wife's question, replied in an angry tone—but a tone indicative rather of mental irration than of displeasure with the former—

"How should *I* know what it means? How come you to ask *me* what it means, Julia? Am I to read and expound all the trashy riddles of a trashy newspaper?" And he looked sternly at his wife, as if to see whether her face discovered any latent meaning.

"How, Edward dear? Why so angry with me for so simple a question?" said Mrs Mowbray. "I am sure if I had thought for a moment that it would have offended you, I should never have put it. Excuse me, Edward dear—excuse me!"

Mowbray, who tenderly loved his wife, looked at her for an instant, then, rushing towards her, embraced her affectionately, exclaiming—

"Excuse you, my angel! Why excuse you?—you have committed no offence. It is *I* who should crave pardon of you, Julia, for the rudeness of which I was guilty. But you will excuse me, Julia love, I know you will, when I tell you that my mind is not quite at ease at present, in consequence of some very harassing and difficult duty I have got to do just now at the office. It frets my temper,

as I fear you have had but too much reason to remark; but I shall endeavour to command myself better in future." And Mowbray again embraced his young and artless wife. The embrace was returned with the same warmth of affection with which it was bestowed; and no further allusion was made to the unfortunate newspaper paragraph.

The mysterious allusions, however, of these paragraphs, still continued to excite the public interest and curiosity, which were worked by them to the highest pitch, till the feeling at length found its way into the Cabinet, accompanied by suspicions of the most serious nature.

Here, after a careful collation of circumstances, and a lengthened and minute inquiry into an immense mass of particulars relative to our naval operations for the preceding two or three years, the conclusion was arrived at that there was treachery somewhere; but where, or with whom this treachery lay, no one could possibly conjecture. At length, however, another step was gained towards the accomplishment of this important discovery: some additional circumstances came to light, which placed it beyond a doubt that the information with which the enemy was supplied came from the Admiralty Office; for their operations in various instances discovered a knowledge of particulars relative to the strength of our ships, their stations, with other descriptions of intelligence of a similar kind, which could have emanated only from such a source, and been furnished only by some person or persons who either were employed in or had access to the Office of the Admiralty. Not only so, but such person or persons, if in the service of the Admiralty, could not be in a very subordinate situation; for such had no access to the important documents which appeared to have been consulted in the present case. The traitor, therefore, whoever he was, must have held a superior and confidential appointment. Still was the government, which was now pursuing its inquiries into this extraordinary affair with great diligence, although, also, with great secrecy and caution, much at a loss on whom to fix the guilt of the traitorous disclosures which led to these inquiries. In this difficulty, a system of the strictest and most secret espionage, both within and over the Admiralty Office, was established; but it was not until the lapse of several weeks that it led to any result. To a result, however, it did eventually lead.

One morning, soon after the various functionaries in the Admiralty Office had commenced the business of the day, two Bow Street officers entered the apartment in which was Edward Mowbray and two or three inferior clerks.

Going straight up to the former, who was at the moment so busily engaged in writing that he had not observed or attended to their entrance—"Your name is Edward Mowbray, sir, I believe," said one of the men.

Mowbray quickly raised his head, saw, and at once knew that they were Bow Street officers who stood beside him. His pen dropped from his hand; he grew as pale as death, and began to tremble violently. Not immediately answering the query put to him, the officer repeated it, when Mowbray, with white and agitated lip, replied, that he was the person named, and asked what was wanted. The officer answered by informing him that he was his prisoner; that he apprehended him on a charge of high treason.

"Me, me—treason—what treason?" exclaimed the unfortunate man, in a state of great nervous excitement and agitation.

"Probably, we may find an explanation of that query here," replied one of the officers, raising the lid of Mowbray's desk, and commencing a scrutiny of the papers it contained. From these, after rummaging for some time, he selected as many as formed a pretty large bundle, which having secured with a piece of red tape, he tucked under his arm, and, turning round to his companion, who was in charge of Mowbray, intimated that they must now move off with the prisoner; that unhappy person, during all this time, had not uttered a word. He was seated on a chair, one of the two officers standing close by him, and appeared to be almost unconscious of all that was passing around him.

Being roused from this state of apathy, he rose to his feet, and, without remark of any kind, accompanied the officers to a coach, which was waiting them outside. Into this he was put—the officers taking a seat one on either side of him—and, in little more than a quarter of an hour after, the unfortunate man found himself locked up, a solitary prisoner, in one of the darkest and most dismal cells of Newgate. Leaving Mowbray in this deplorable situation for a time, we will take a glance at what was passing in the house of the wretched man at this dreadful crisis.

At the precise moment in which the two Bow Street officers, by whom he was apprehended, entered the Admiralty Office, other two of the same brotherhood presented themselves at the door of his house, and demanded admittance. There was to have been a large party to dinner on that day, and Mrs Mowbray was at the moment busily engaged in making preparations for the approaching banquet.

On being informed that there were two men in the lobby, who desired to see her immediately, the young unsuspecting wife of Edward hastened to present herself to them to know their business.

On seeing the men she felt some alarm, their appearance being by no means prepossessing, and her heart beat violently as she asked them, in timid and gentle tones, what were their commands.

"Why, madam," said one of them, "we wish to see some papers of your husband's, and will thank you to shew us his writing desk, or escritoir, or whatever else he keeps them things in."

Not knowing, nor being able to form the most distant idea of what was the meaning or purpose of this extraordinary demand, indeed scarcely knowing what she did, Mrs Mowbray immediately conducted the officers to her husband's private apartment, and pointed out to them the desk in which he usually kept all his papers.

This desk the officers immediately forced open, and possessed themselves of all the written papers it contained. It was now only, when she had seen this violence, which impressed her with the conviction that some dreadful calamity was about to befall, or had perhaps already befallen her husband, that Mrs Mowbray ventured to inquire of the officer what was the meaning of these proceedings.

She was informed that her husband was accused of, and already apprehended on a charge of high treason for holding a traitorous correspondence with France.

Clasping her hands together in an agony of grief, and giving utterance to a wild and piercing cry of mental anguish, the beautiful young wife of Edward Mowbray reeled backwards a few paces, and sank insensible on the floor; and it was not for several hours afterwards that she was restored to a consciousness of the misery that had befallen her.

On this taking place, it was found her senses had deserted her. She awoke in wild delirium, and continued for hours to utter the most heartrending shrieks and exclamations, calling on "her Edward" to come to her, and to protect her from "these dreadful men." This state of violent excitement, however, could not last. It did not. In a few hours, Mrs Mowbray sank into a state of unconscious lethargy; and, in this condition, remained for many weeks.

In the meantime, a large mass of the most uncontestible evidence of the guilt of Edward Mowbray was accumulated;

and, on the strength of this evidence, the unfortunate man was brought to trial. His appearance in the court excited a strong sensation in his favour, as, notwithstanding the great alteration for the worse which a long course of mental suffering had effected, his countenance and figure were still singularly handsome and pleasing. Nor was his manner even in the unhappy circumstances in which he was placed, less prepossessing: it was calm and collected; and, betraying no unmanly timidity, was equally removed from audacious hardihood.

These qualities, however, agreeable as they were, could be in no ways permitted to affect the fate of their hapless possessor. However much sympathy they might excite, they could neither extenuate nor aggravate the very serious crime with which he was charged.

This crime was proved, proved throughout all its ramifications, and Edward Mowbray was condemned to death. Sentence was followed by execution; and the unfortunate young man—for he had not yet passed his eight-and-twentieth year—perished on a scaffold.

On the trial it appeared that the criminal had been for several years in correspondence with France, and that he had received, from time to time, very large sums of money for the information he gave. Evidence, too, was brought forward to shew the expensive style in which he lived, with the view of establishing the fact of his expenditure far exceeding his legitimate income, and thus leading to the inference of his having some secret and unlawful sources of gain. The exposé here was most flagrant. It was shewn that he had only five hundred per annum; that he had lived at the rate of nearly two thousand; and that the furnishing of his house alone had cost from three to four thousand pounds.

It farther appeared, that Mowbray had first fallen into the criminal courses which led to his miserable fate, by forming an accidental acquaintance, at a coffee-room, with a Frenchman of the name of La Place—a fellow of low habits, low birth, and no education, who gave himself out as a reduced man of rank. In this personage the reader will at once recognise the foreign Count to whom we introduced him at an early part of our story. They were the same; and it was, as already hinted, through the machinations of this fellow, that poor Mowbray fell into those treasonable practises which eventually conducted him to the gibbet.

La Place himself, very undeservedly, escaped the dismal fate which overtook his unhappy associate in crime. Having, by some means or other, obtained early intelligence of the discoveries which Government had made regarding his own and Mowbray's proceedings, he, without being at the trouble of apprising the former of his danger, or giving him the slightest hint of his own intentions, suddenly left London, and eventually succeeded in reaching his native country in safety. He subsequently proceeded to Paris, where, with the money he had accumulated by his nefarious practises in England, and a handsome pension which he obtained from his own Government for his valuable services, he lived, for many years, in a first-rate style of fashion.

Having brought our dismal story to this point, we have now only to add, that Mrs Mowbray's friends in Scotland, on hearing of her husband's apprehension, hurried up to London; and, on the first appearance of convalescence on the part of the unfortunate lady, brought her down to Seaport, where she shortly after died of that disease so affectingly spoken of by Washington Irving—a broken heart; one far more common in the world than is generally supposed. Silence is its attribute—on silence it feeds—and in silence it consumes the body, while friends are busy classifying the disease according to theories of vulgar nosology.

MARK FORSTER, ESQ.;

OR

THE SPIRIT OF CONTRADICTION.

"I SAY, Tom, my lad," said Mark Forster, Esq.—a stout, short, choleric West India planter, lately returned to his native country, Scotland, from the quarter of the world just named—"I say, Tom, my lad," he said, addressing his son, 'it is about time now, I conceive, that you were beginning to think of some profession or other. I wish you would take the matter into your serious consideration immediately. I leave the choice entirely to yourself, and will be glad to forward your views as far I can, in whatever line of life you may choose to adopt."

Tom thanked his father for this unwonted instance, not of simple compliance only, but of compliance by anticipation, with what wishes he might yet form, and promised to take the subject proposed to him into that serious consideration which his father had recommended.

It is true that Tom had been frequently *bitten* before by similar exhibitions of a compliant spirit on the part of his worthy parent; but, frequently as he had been deceived, by it, he could not help believing his father in earnest on the present occasion. He was soon, however, set to rights on this matter.

"Ay, ay, very good, Tom," said Mr Forster, when his son had expressed the gratitude he felt. "Well, now, but have you never yet thought of any profession? Is there none that you have thought of with any degree of preference?"

"Why, to tell you a truth then, father, since you are so good," replied Tom, "I have a great fancy for the army. I should like it above all other professions."

"Hem—the army," muttered Mr Forster. "By Jingo! there it is now as usual: you have stumbled on, or rather, I believe, purposely chosen the profession I abhor of all others. The army! By Jingo, sir, I would as soon see you a negro-driver—a chimney-sweep—a—— anything!"

"Well, father," replied Tom, mildly, "there's no occasion for your getting into a passion on the subject. Since my choice does not meet with your approbation, I abandon it at once."

"O you do—do you? What a cursed want of firmness. You give way at once; you turn like a weather-cock with every puff of wind; you have no mind of your own—no determination. Pho; but I do despise the man who can't or wont stick to his point. If you prefer the army, why the devil do you not insist upon it. Why don't you say—'Into the army I shall go, by Jingo.'"

"Then I *do* say so, father," replied Tom, smiling.

"Do you, sirrah!" exclaimed the former, looking fiercely at his son. "Then *I* say, by Jingo, you shant. Would you resist my authority, sir—eh? Would you rebel? Would you do what I expressly forbid?"

"By no means, sir," said Tom. "I trust I know my duty towards you better than to be guilty of any such disobedience."

"Well, well, Tom, take another glass of wine, and no more about it," said Mr Forster, a little mollified, and shoving the wine decanter towards his son. "Take this matter into your consideration, and propose me something more rational as a profession in the course of a day or two, and we will see what can be done."

Tom promised compliance, and shortly after withdrew from the table, quitted the room, and left his father to finish his bottle of Madeira alone.

On leaving the apartment, young Forster hastened to seek his mother and sister, to communicate to them the disappointment of his hopes regarding the army; for, be it known to the reader, that, although Tom's predilection for that particular line of life has been made to appear but in a

sort of incidental way, it was yet a deep-seated one, and of long standing. It had, moreover, the approbation of both his mother and sister, at least in so far as they desired to see his wish in this respect gratified.

"It's all up then, mother!" exclaimed Tom, as he entered the apartment in which his mother and sister sat. "All up."

"What's up, Tom?" said his mother, in some surprise at the excitation in her son's manner.

"The army," replied the latter. "He wont allow me on any account to enter it."

"You must have been proposing it to him then," rejoined Mrs Forster; "and you know that was a very absurd way of proceeding with your father."

"I certainly did," replied Tom; "but not before he had invited me to name any profession I chose."

And he went on to detail the particulars of the conversation he had just had with his father.

"And you bit, Tom?" said his mother laughing.

"I certainly did."

"Then, you should have known your father better, Tom; you should have known that to propose a thing to him was a certain way to have him set his face against it. But I don't know but I could manage the matter for you yet. Leave the affair in my hands, Tom; and I am much mistaken if, within a week, I do not obtain, not only your father's consent to your entering the army, but his most positive injunctions for you to do so."

Two days after this, Mrs Forster, availing herself of what she conceived to be a favourable opportunity for accomplishing the apparently hopeless task of getting her worthy husband to do what she wished, thus addressed him—

"So Tom and you, my dear, have had some conversation, he tells me, about a profession for him."

"We have, ma'am; but not a very satisfactory one—at least not to him, I should suppose, the puppy!" replied Mr Forster.

"He proposed the army, I understand," said Mrs Forster. "I am delighted, my dear, to find that you refused your consent to so absurd a proposal."

"I did, ma'am, certainly," replied Mr Forster; "but I don't exactly see the absurdity of it. It was on wholly different grounds that *I* objected to Tom's adopting the profession of arms."

"Well, my dear, it doesn't matter on what grounds you objected to it: it is enough for me that you *have* objected to it; for I abhor and detest the army, and wouldn't see my son in it for the world."

"And pray, why not, ma'am?" rejoined Mr Forster. "It appears to me to be a very honourable profession—that's the light I view it in. A very honourable and noble profession, ma'am."

"Well, well, my dear, take what view of it you please, so long as you do not allow Tom to enter it," replied Mrs Forster, "*that* is quite enough for me; it's all I want."

"Indeed, ma'am! Then, I suppose, I am to understand that you would not have Tom be a soldier because *I* said the profession was an honourable and a noble one," replied Mr Forster. "Is it not so, ma'am? I rather think it is. The pleasure of thwarting me—eh? The old story."

Mrs Forster assured her choleric husband that she had no such purpose in view. To this assurance her amiable husband made no reply, but smoked his cigar with increased energy; when his wife, thinking that she had now said enough to secure her point, left her worthy spouse to finish his bottle of Madeira, and to strengthen himself in that spirit of opposition which she saw she had already excited.

"Well, Tom," said Mr Forster to his son, whom he accidentally met in the garden before breakfast on the following morning, "have you been thinking over what we were talking of the other day? Dropt all idea of the army, eh?"

"Entirely, father. I have thought better of it, and wouldn't take a commission now if it were offered me."

"Oh, you wouldn't—wouldn't you? Many a prettier fellow than you would be deuced glad to have a commission offered to him though—I can tell you that."

"No doubt of it, father," said Tom; "I only speak for myself."

"Ay, and a pretty speech you have made of it," replied old crusty. "I tell you what it is, Tom: this here is another proof of the truth of what I have always said, that your mother and you—for I find she is of the same mind with you about the sodgering—take a delight in contradicting my wishes. Nay, both you and she seem to have some infernal knack of discovering these wishes before they are expressed, and employ this gift of prescience in preparing to oppose them. It is so in this very instance. I have been thinking more of your proposition of going into the army; and, after taking everything into consideration, have come to the conclusion, that it is, after all, the best thing you can do. Well, mark me, no sooner have *I* come to this way of thinking, than, behold, you come to a directly opposite one. Now, isn't this deuced annoying? However, I won't be thwarted, sir, by either you or your mother. So I shall directly purchase a commission for you in the army; and, if you don't accept it, I shall cut you off with a shilling—that's all. Now, go and tell your mother what I have determined on, and hold yourself in readiness, sir, to troop off with the first order from the Horse Guards. These are my orders to you, and I expect them to be obeyed."

Tom durst make no reply; for the desired point being gained, it was unnecessary to urge him farther by pretended opposition; and to have expressed acquiescence, would have undone all that had been accomplished, as the worthy gentleman would, in such a case, to a certainty, have gone off on an opposite tack. Neither durst he exhibit any sign of satisfaction, as this would have had precisely the same effect. To escape from this dilemma, then, Tom, without replying a word, hastened out of the room and sought his mother, on whom he burst with a face radiant with joy.

"Lord love you, mother!" he exclaimed, in an ecstasy of delight; "you have done it—you have done it. I have this moment received my father's most positive orders to hold myself in readiness to join, the moment he obtains my commission; and he has desired me to tell you this, because you didn't wish it."

"Much obliged to him, I am sure," replied Mrs Forster, smiling.

"But how on earth did you manage it, mother?"

"The easiest thing on earth, my dear," replied the latter. "I had only to say that I was against it, and the thing was done. Contradictory people, my dear, like your father, are the most accommodating and easiest managed of any. You have only to work them by contraries, and you may get them to do whatever you please. You have only to say that you dislike a thing, or, if you are very anxious to have it, to say you abhor it, and it is done."

WILSON'S
Historical, Traditionary, and Imaginative
TALES OF THE BORDERS,
AND OF SCOTLAND.

EXCLUSIVES AND INCLUSIVES.

In no part of her Majesty's dominions does the mighty giant aristocracy rear his proud head with greater majesty than in Linton. There are, or were, in the neighbourhood of that ancient borough, no fewer than forty-five lairds, all possessing portions of the soil; and from the soil it is that the big genius of aristocratic pride derives, like the old oak, the pith of his power. It is of no avail to say—and we, being ourselves of an old family, as poor as the old dark denizens of the soil who were displaced by the Norwegian brown species, despise the taunt—that fifteen out of the whole number of Linton lairds were, at one period, on the poor's box. Gentry, with old noble blood in their veins, are not a whit less to be valued that they are beggars. It is the peculiar character of gentle blood, that it never gets thinner by poor meat. A low marriage sometimes deteriorates it; and hence the horror of the privileged species at that kind of degradation; but the tenth cousin of a scurvy baronet will retain the purity of the noble fluid in spite of husks, acorns, and onions. All the efforts of the patriots called Radicals—even if they should have recourse to the starving system, by taking the properties of their masters—will never be able to bring down to a proper popular equal consistency the blood of the old stock; and so long as they dare not, for the spilling of their own thin stuff, *let out* the life stream of their lords, they must submit to see it running in the old channels as ruby and routhy as it did in the reign of Malcolm Canmore.

But you may say that Laird Geddes of Cauldshouthers was no Linton laird, and was never on the poor's box. Take it as you please, we will not dispute with you if you come from Tweeddale. You are, perhaps, of the old Hamiltons of Cauldcoats, or the Bertrams of Duckpool, or the Hays of Glenmuck, or the old Tory lairds of Bogend, Hallmyre, or Windylaws, and may challenge us, like a true knight, for endeavouring to reduce the grandeur of your compeers; and therefore, to keep peace, we will be contented with the admisssion that Gilbert Geddes was the thane, or, as Miss Joanna Baillie would have it, according to the distinction indicated in the line, "the *thanies* drinking in the hall," the thanie—that is, the lesser Thane of Cauldshouthers, in the shire of Peebles. True, there were in that county, properly only one thane, viz., he of Drumelzier, whose castle, now in ruins, may still be seen near Powsail; but of the lesser order there were many; and, if any gutter-blooded burgher of Linton had, in his cups at Cantswalls, alleged anything to the contrary, he might have been set down as a leveller. The property of Cauldshouthers was of that kind comprehending a mixture of bog, mire, and moss, which is indicated by its name. Indeed, almost all the estates in that shire bore names no less appropriate; and, though some proprietors, such as Montgomery, Veitch, Keith, and Kennedy, have endeavoured to impart a gentility to their possessions by rechristening them, they did so, we shrewdly suspect, to conceal the fact that they were new comers, and not of the noble old Hallmyres, Bogends, Blairbogs, and Cauldcoats. Not so, however, Gilbert Geddes, for the laird was of the good ancient stock of Cauldshouthers, and gloried in the name as he did in the old blood that had come down through honourable veins, unadulterated and unobstructed—save probably by a partial congelation, the effect of the cold barren lands—until it landed, with an accumulation of dignity, in his own arteries, and those of his sister, Miss Grizelda.

Nothing in the world could have been more natural than that one of so old a family should endeavour to keep up the stock by marriage; yet it was true, and as lamentable as true, that Mr Gilbert had not been able—though the fiftieth summer had shone on Cauldshouthers since he was born in the old house—to get matters so arranged as to place himself within the noose in a manner befitting his dignity. Somehow or another, the other proprietors around, such as Bogend and Glenmuck, pretended to discover that their blood was thicker than that of the Geddeses, and not a scion of their stocks would they allow to be engrafted on the good old oak of Cauldshouthers. It is, however, an old saying, that fortune favours the brave in marriage as in war, and the adage seemed fair to be realized, for, one day, the laird came from Linton a walking omen of prospective success, and the very first words he said to his sister Grizelda boded good.

"Ken ye the dame Shirley, wha lives at the east end o' Linton?" said he, as he sat down on the big oak chair in the mansion of Cauldshouthers.

"Better than you do, Gilbert," rejoined the sister. "Her maiden name is Bertram; but, wha her husband was is no easy tauld. They say he was a captain in England, but I canna say she has ony o the dignity o' a captain's widow. Report says naething in her favour, unless it be that she's a descendant o' the Bertrams o' Duckpool."

"Ah Grizel!" ejaculated Gilbert, "if ye could mak out that pedigree, a' her fauts would be easily covered, especially with the help of the five thousand she has got left her by a cotton-spinner in St Mungo's. Ye maun try and mak out the pedigree, Grizel. Set about it, woman; mair depends on't than ye wot."

"What depends on't?" replied the sister.

"Maybe the junction o' the twa ancient families," rejoined he.

"Are ye serious, brother?" said Grizel, as she stroked down her boddice, and sat as upright as the dignity of the family of Cauldshouthers required.

"Indeed am I," rejoined the laird. "I want to be about with Bogend and Glenmuck, who refused me their dochters. Ken ye the antiquity o' the Bertrams?"

"Brawly," was the reply of the stiff Grizelda. "They count as far back as the fifth James, who, passing through Tweeddale, was determined to pay nae court to the Thane of Drumelzier; and yet he couldna mak his way—in a country where hill rides upon hill, and moss joins moss, frae Tweedscross to the Cauldstane-slap—without some assistance, the mair by note that he stuck in the mire, and might have been there yet, had it no been for Jock Bertram, a hind, who got the royal traveller and his men out, and led them through the thane's lands, to Glenwhappen. John got the mire whar the king stuck, which was called

Duckpool, as a free gift to him and his heirs. But we o' Cauldshouthers are aulder, I ween, than even that, and we maun keep up our dignity."

"So we maun, Grizel; but you've forgot the best part o' the story, how the Thane o' Drumelzier having heard that a stranger had passed through his lands without paying him homage, rode with his men, mounted on white horses, after the rebels, and cam up with them just as the King was carousing after his journey. The thane, I wot, was sune on his knees. But we're aff the pin o' the wheel, Girz. The question is, could the family o' Geddes o' Cauldshouthers stand the shock o' a marriage wi' a doubtfu' descendant o' Jock Bertram, with five thousand in her pouch?"

"We're sae *very, very* ancient, ye see, Gib," replied the sister, as she looked meditatingly, and twirled her two thumbs at the end of her rigid arms. "Indeed, we're a'thegither lost in mist, and, for aught we ken, we may be as auld as the Hunters o' Polmood, wha got a grant o' the twa Hopes frae Malcolm Canmore. Duckpool is a mere bairn to Cauldshouthers, and this woman mayna be a real Bertram after a'. There were English Bertrams, ye ken—Bertram the Archer was o' them, and he followed the trade o' robbery."

"And what auld honourable family about the Borders ever got their lands in ony other way, Girz!" replied the brother.

"Nane, of course," rejoined Grizel; "but maybe Mrs Shirley comes frae the real Bertrams, and five thousand might be laid out in draining the lands. Nae doubt she wad jump at ye, Gib!"

"That makes me laugh, Girz!" rejoined the brother. "The legatee o' a cotton-spinner jumpat the Laird o' Cauldshouthers! Ay, if he wad stoop to let her—that's the question, sister; and there's nae other, for I was wi' the dame this very day, within an hour after Rory Flayem, the Linton writer, gave me the hint o' her gude fortune. I cam on her wi' a the force o' the dignity o' our family, and the very name o' our lands made her shiver in Tory veneration. She was thunderstruck at the honour."

"I dinna wonder at that," replied Grizel. "I mysel hae aften wondered at the ancientness o' our house, and pity the silly fools wha change the names o' their properties. Ha, ha! I fancy if the Duke o' Argyle had been ane o' the auld Blairbogs, he wadna hae changed the name o' their auld inheritance to that o' 'The Whim.'"

"Na, faith he, Girz!"

"And, by my troth," continued the sister, "I think the guidwife o' Middlebie, wha bade us change Cauldshouthers to Blinkbonny, was a wee envious, and deserved a catechizing for her pains."

"There's nae doubt o't," added the brother. "But we're aff the wire again, Girz. Is it really your honest opinon that our honour would stand the shock o' the connection wi' the Widow Shirley?"

"The Emperor o' Muscovy," replied the sister, with a toss of her head, "didna lose a jot o' his greatness by marrying the cottager. The eagles o' Glenholme stoop to pick up the stanechaffers and fatten on them; and, really, I think, a'thing considered, that Cauldshouthers might, without a bend o' the back, bear up a burgher."

"The practice is, at least, justified by the aristocracy," added Gilbert; "and, ye ken, that's enough for *us*. It wad tak a guid drap o' burgher bluid, and mair, I wot, if there's ony o' the Duckpool sap in't, to thin that o' the Geddeses."

"And even if our honour was a wee thing damaged," rejoined the sister, "that might be made up by our lands being changed frae bog to arable, though, I believe, the bog, after a', is the auldest soil o' the country. Even the sad fate o' Nichol Muschet didna a'thegither destroy the respectability o' the Bogha's. There's great ancientness in bogs, yet as there's a kind o' fashion now-a-days about arable, I wadna be against the change to a certain limited extent. Ye hae now my opinion on this important subject, Gilbert, and may act according to the dictates o' the high spirit o' our auld race."

The door opened, and Rory Flayem entered.

"Weel, hae ye made the inquiry?" said the laird. "Has Mrs Shirley really got a legacy o' the five thousand?"

"I have seen the cotton-spinner's will!" replied the writer, "and there can be nae doubt of the legacy."

Why more?—Next day the spruce laird was rapping at the door of the widow heiress. He entered with the cool dignity of his caste; and might have come out under the influence of the same cool prudence, had not his honourable blood been fired by the presence of one of those worthies already hinted at—a Linton laird—who could have been about nothing else in the world than trying to get a lift from off the poor's box, by the assistance of the Widow Shirley.

"Your servant, sir," said the Linton portioner; "I did not think you had been acquainted here. Ane might rather hae expected to hae seen you about Bogend or Glenmuck, where there are still some braw leddies to dispose of."

The remark was impertinent, doubtless, and horribly ill-timed, because Cauldshouthers had been rejected by Bogend, and he was here a suitor competing with one who desecrated the term he gloried in, and whom, along with the whole class of Linton lairds, he hated mortally; and he had a good right to hate them, for some of them, with no more than ten pounds a-year, were still heritors, and not only heritors, but ancient heritors, not much less ancient than the Geddeses themselves, so that they were a species of mock aristocrats, coming yet so near the real ones in the very attributes which the latter arrogated to themselves, that it required an effort of the mind to distinguish the real from the false. But Mr Gilbert admitted of no such dubiety, and marked the difference decidedly and effectually. He did not return the Linton aristocrat an answer, but, drawing himself up, turned to the window as if to survey his competitor's estate, which consisted of a rood or two of arable land, and to wait till the latter took his hat. The Linton aristocrat very soon left the room; and however unimportant this slight event may appear, it was in fact decisive of the higher aristocrat's fate, for the blood of the Geddeses was up, and the heat of Tory blood is a condition of the precious fluid not to be laughed at.

"Ye'll hae nae want o' thae sma' heritor creatures after ye, dame," said he, as he condescended to sit down by the blushing widow.

"Yes," answered she, with great simplicity. "Fortune, Mr Geddes, brings friends, or, at least, would-be friends, and one who has few relations requires to be on her guard."

"It is everything in thae matters," said the proprietor, "to look to respectability and station. Thae Linton bodies ca' themselves lairds, because they are proprietors o' about as muckle ground as would mak guid roomy graves to them. A real laird is something very different. And it's a pity when it becomes necessary that *we* should shew them the difference."

"Ah, you are of an ancient and honourable family, Mr Geddes," said the widow. "Cauldshouthers is a name as familiar to me as Oliver Castle, or Drochel, or Neidpath, or Drumelzier."

"I see ye hae a proper estimate o' the degrees o' dignity, dame," said he; "and, doubtless, ye'll mak the better use o' the fortune that has been left ye; but I could expect naething less frae ane o' the Duckpools. I'm thinking ye're o' the right Bertrams."

"Yes," replied she; "and then my husband was descended from the Shirleys, Earl Ferrars, and Baron Ferrars

of Chartley. His arms were the same as the Beauchamps, at least he used to say so What are your's, Mr Geddes?"

"Maybe ye dinna ken heraldry, dame!" replied the laird. "Our arms are vert, *three peat hags*, argent—the maist ancient o' the bearings in Tweeddale; as, indeed, may be evinced frae the description—peat land being clearly the original soil. Would it no be lamentable to think that sae ancient a family should end in my person."

"It is in your own power to prevent that, Mr Geddes!" answered she.

"Say rather in your power, dame Shirley!" rejoined he, determined to cut out the Linton heritor by one bold stroke.

"O Mr Geddes!" sighed the widow, holding her head at the proper angle of *naïveté*.

"Nae wonder that she's owrepowered by the honour," muttered the suitor, as he took breath to finish what he had so resolutely begun. "I am serious, madam," he continued. "To be plain wi' ye, and come to the point at aince, I want a mistress to Cauldshouthers; and you are the individual wham I hae selected to do the honours o' that important situation."

"Oh—O Mr Geddes!" again cried the dame. "You have *such* a winning way of wooing!"

"I fancy there canna be the slightest breath o' objection," again said he, in his consciousness of having ennobled her in an instant by the mere hint of the honour.

"She would be a bold woman, besides a fool, that would reject so good an offer," replied she, burying her face in a napkin.

"That she would," rejoined Gilbert—"baith bauld and an idiot; and now, since ye hae received the honour wi' suitable modesty and gratitude, there is just ae condition that I wad like satisfied; and that is, that ye wad do your best to support the dignity o' the station to which you are to be elevated. Your ain pedigree, ye see, is at best but a dubious concern; and, therefore, it will require a' your efforts to comport yoursel in such a way as to accord suitably wi' the forms and punctilios o' aristocracy. It is just as weel, by the by, that ye hae few relatives; because, while the honour o' our ancient house may retain its character, in spite o' a match maybe in nae sma' degree below it, it might become a very different affair in the case o' a multitude o' puir beggarly relations."

"I am nearly the last of my race, Mr Geddes," replied she. "Is it not strange that we should be so very like each other?"

"Ay, in *that* particular respect," added the laird, as a salvo of their inequality.

And, after some farther concerted arrangements, the heritor left his affianced, and proceeded to Cauldshouthers, to report to Grizelda what he had achieved. In a short time, accordingly, the marriage was solemnized; and a very suitable display was made in the mansion of Cauldshouthers, where there were invited many of the neighbouring aristocrats. There were the Bogends, and the Hallmyres, and the Glenmucks, and others, some of whom, though they had asserted a superiority over the Geddeses, and turned up their noses at the match with a burgher widow with five thousand pounds, made by the vulgar operation of cotton-spinning, yet could not refuse the boon of their presence at the wedding of one of their own sect of exclusives. Miss Grizelda acted as mistress of the ceremonies, and contrived, by proper training, to make the bride go through the aristocratic drill with much eclat. She had correct opinions, as well as good practice, in this department. It is only the degenerate modern town-elite, among the exclusives, who pretend that *easiness* of manners —meaning thereby the total absence of all dignified *stiffness*—is the true test of aristocratic breeding. The older and truer stock of the country—such as the Geddeses—lespise this beggarly town-born maxim: with them nothing can be too stiff; buckram-attitudes and dresses are the very staple of their calling. And why not? Anygraceful snab or snip, of good spirits, when freed from the stool or board, may be as free and frisky as a kitten; but to carry out a legitimate and consistent stiffness of the godlike machine with an according costiveness of speech and loftiness of sentiment, can belong only to those who have been born great; and so, to be sure, these were the maxims on which Grizelda acted in qualifying the bride to appear in a becoming manner before the Tweeddale grandees. Everything went off well. The dame was given out as a Duckpool; and it must have been fairly admitted, even by the proud Bogends, that she could not have acted her part better though she had been in reality descended from that house, so favoured by the fifth James, at the very time that he brought Drumelzier to his knees at Glenwhappen.

And it may thus be augured, that the Thane of Cauldshouthers was satisfied. The manners imparted to Mrs Geddes by the sister, seemed to adhere to her; and though the Glenmucks alleged that her dignified rigidity was nothing but burgher awkwardness, it was not believed by those who knew that gentle blood hath in it some seeds of spleen.

"She performs her pairt wi' native dignity," was Gilbert's opinion expressed to his sister; "and seems to feel as if she had been born to sustain the important character she has to play, as the wife o' ane o' the auldest heritors o' Tweeddale. But ye maun keep at her, Girz; and, while you are improving her, I'll be busy with the bogs. We'll mak a' arable that will be arable."

And straightway, accordingly, he set about disposing of a part of his wife's tocher, in planting, and draining, and hedging, and ditching, with a view to impart some heat to Cauldshouthers, in return for the warmth which the fleeces of coarse wool had yielded to him and others. Meanwhile, the training within doors went on. Tea-parties were good discipline; and at one of these, the mistress of Bogend and her two daughters, and the mistress of Hallmyre and her daughter and nephew, and a number of others, witnessed the improvement of their new married neighbour. Pedigrees were always the favourite topic at Cauldshouthers.

"I maun hae Mrs Geddes's reduced to paper," said the laird, "for the satisfaction o' ye a'. I like a tree—there 's a certainty about it that defies a' envy. There 's few o' us, I wot, that can count sae far back as the Bertrams."

"Mrs Geddes might tell us off hand," said the mistress of Bogend, piqued of course. "I could gie the Bogends from the first to the last."

"And I hae a' the Ha'myres on my tongue's-end," said she of that old family.

"And I could gie the Geddeses, stock and stem," added Grizelda.

"But it doesna follow that Mrs Geddes has just the same extent o' memory," said the laird, as a cover to his half-marrow.

"Indeed, my memory is very poor on family descents," said the wife; "and there is now none of our family left to assist my recollections."

"Ah, Janet," cried a voice from the door, which had opened in the meantime and let in a stout huckster looking dame and two children. "I am right glad to see you sae weel settled," she continued, as she bustled forward and seized the mistress of the house by the hand. "But it wasna friendly, it wasna like a sister, woman, no to write and tell me o' yer marriage. Heigh! but I am tired after that lang ride frae Glasgow. Sit down, childer; it's yer aunty's house, and, by my faith, it's nae sma affair; but, oh, it has an awfu name."

The speaker had it all to herself, save for a whisper from the lady of Bogend, who asked her of Hallmyres if this would be another of the Duckpools. The others were

dumb from amazement; and the new-comer gloried in the silence.

"Wasna that a lucky affair—that siller left us by the cotton-spinner?" she rattled forth with increasing volubility. "Be quiet, childer. Faith, lass, if we hadna got our legacy just in the nick as it were, our John, wha was only makin six shillings a-week at the hecklin, wad hae gi'en up the ghaist athegither."

The laird was getting fidgetty, and looked round for the servant; Grizelda was still dumb; the Bogends and Hallmyres were all curiosity; and Mrs Geddes looked as if she could not help it. All was still an open field for the speaker.

"But, dear me, lass," again cried the visiter, "we never heard o' Serjeant Shirley's death."

"If ye're ony friend o' Mrs Geddes's," said the laird, recovering himself, "you had better step ben to the parlour, and she'll see you there."

"Ou, I'm brawly where I am, sir," replied she of St Mungo's. "There 's nae use for ceremony wi' friends. Ye'll be Janet's husband, I fancy? Keep aff the back o' yer uncle's chair, ye ill-mannered brat."

"There is a woman in the parlour wishes to see you, Mrs Geddes," said the servant.

"What like is she?" cried the Glasgow friend. "Is she a weel-faured woman, wi' a bairn at her foot?"

"Yes," was the reply.

"Just bring her in here, then," continued the speaker. "It's our sister Betty. I asked her to meet me here the day, and she was to get a cast o' a cart as far as Linton. She was to hae brocht Saunders wi' her, but there's some great folk dead about Lithgow, and he's been sae thrang wi' their mournings that I fancy he couldna win."

'Are these your sisters, Mrs Geddes?" said the lady of Bogend, who probably enjoyed secretly the perplexity around her.

"I can answer for mysel," replied the visiter; "and whether this be Betty or no, I'll soon tell ye;' and she rose to waddle to the door to satisfy the inquiry of the lady of Bogend. "The truth is, madam," she said, by way of favoured intelligence, as she passed the chair of the latter, "we're a' sisters; but, if we had been on the richt side o' the blanket—ye ken what I mean, if our faither and mither had been married—the siller left us by our uncle the cotton-spinner wad hae been twice as muckle. Is that you, Betty?" she bawled at the door. "Come in, woman."

"Save us!—save us!—the honour o' the Geddeses is gane for ever," groaned Gilbert.

"It's just me, Peggy," responded another voice from the passage; and the heavy tread of a weary traveller, mixed with the cries of a child, announced an approach. The two entered. The woman was dressed like the wife of a man of her husband's profession, who had got a recent legacy.

"Saunders is coming, after a'," cried Betty, as she entered. "He got done with the mournings on Wednesday. He's in the public-house, alang the road there, taking a dram wi' a friend, and will be here immediately. John, I fancy, couldna win. Ye're weel set doon, Janet," she continued, as she stood and stared at the room, turning round and round. "My troth, lass, ye hae fa'n on yer feet at last. It was just as weel the sergeant de'ed. Sit ye there, Geordie, and see if ye can learn manners enough to haud yer tongue."

The little cousins, Geordie, Johnny, and Jessy, entered instantly into a clattering of friendly recognizances; and the two mothers bustled forward to chairs alongside of their sister, the lady of the house, whose colour had come and gone twenty times, and all power of speech had been taken away from her by a discovery as sudden as it was unpleasant. Yet what was to be done? Was the aristocratic Grizelda to sit and see tea filled out for the wives and weans of a dresser of yarns, and an artificer of garments? Was the honour of the Geddeses of Cauldshouthers to be scuttled by a needle and a hackle-tooth? But matters were not destined to remain even upon the poise of these pivots. The little nephew of Hallmyres, annoyed by the burgher-bairns, struck one of them a blow in the face, which the spruce scion of the Lithgow tailor returned with far more gallantry than might have been expected from one of his degenerate caste. The cousin Johnny took the part of his relative; and matters were fast progressing towards hostilities, when the lady of Hallmyres rose to quell the incipient affair.

"Aff hands, my woman," cried Peggy, suddenly leaving her chair.

"Ay, ay," added Betty, "we hae at least a right to civility in the house o' our sister. We come kindly and friendly, as may be seen frae what's in my bundle—a gude bacon ham, and a gude cassimir waistcoat, sewed by Saunders' ain hands, for the guidman o' Cauldshouthers; and a' we want is something like friendliness in return. Just let the bairns alane. They'll gree fine when better acquaint."

"Mrs Geddes," said Grizelda, with a puckered face and a starched manner, "ye'll better tak yer friends ben the house."

"Awa wi' them!" added the laird. "We maun hae a reckoning about a' this."

"There's no the sma'est occasion for't," responded Betty. "The bairns will agree fine. Just let them play themselves while we're taking our tea. Saunders will be here immediately."

"A guid advice," added Peggy; "but wha are our friends, Janet? Canna ye speak, woman? This will be Mr Geddes, my brither-in-law, I fancy; and this will be Girzie, my gude-sister; but as for the others, I ken nae mair about them than I do o' the brothers and sisters o the sergeant, wham I never saw."

"And here comes Saunders, at last," cried Peggy, rising, and running to the window. "I will gang and let him in."

Bustling to the door, she executed her purpose, and straightway appeared again, ushering in, with a face that told her pride in her husband, a Crispinite, wonderfully *bien fait*, dressed in a suit of glossy black, clean shaven, and as pale as any sprig of nobility.

"Mr Geddes, I presume," said he, rubbing his hands, which retained the marks of the needle, if not the die of the mournings.

"Here's a chair for ye, Saunders," cried Betty. "Ye'll no be caring for tea, after the gill ye had wi' yer auld foreman, at the sign o' the 'Harrow,' yonder. Had ye ony mair after I left ye? I'm no sure about yer e'e. There's mair glamour in't than there should be. Sit ye down, and I'll bring the bundle with the ham and the waistcoat."

Grizelda held up her hands in amazement.

"For the love o' heaven, leave us, good leddies," she said to her friends.

"Oh ay," added the laird, "leave us, leave us, for mercy's sake."

"You have got into a duckpool," whispered the Lady of Hallmyres, as she rose, followed by the others; "and I wish you fair out of it. Good by—good by."

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